Espinosa hits back at rivals for top AFP post

STORY BELOW, COLUMN 1

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2001 ★ 32 PAGES 3 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 88 ₱15

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- **Bangko Sentral eyes rate cut** BUSINESS / B1
- **Big 3 to defer oil price hikes** NEWS / A2
- **Singapore offers help** BUSINESS / B1

Gov't seeks TRO to stop Danding

BY ROCKY NAZARENO

SOLICITOR General Simeon Marcelo yesterday asked the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order to stop businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco from voting the sequestered shares of the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) at the bank's stockholders'

GOV'T/ A11

Laarni plans to leave RP, but Loi pledges to remain

BY TJ BURGONIO
AND VOLT CONTRERAS

IF Joseph Estrada is supposedly planning to skip town along with some members of his family, his mistress Laarni Enriquez is allegedly also intending to fly the coop.

Citing intelligence information, Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo yesterday said the ex-starlet with whom Estrada has three children plans to leave for the United States anytime now.

Domingo said that the recent Supreme Court decision upholding Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency and stripping Estrada of immunity from suits had prompted Enriquez to think of leaving the country at once.

But Estrada's wife, Dr. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, denied that she or the disgraced President had attempted to flee or ever planned to leave the country.

"The charge made by the unidentified (Armed Forces) 'senior official' about our supposed (attempted) escape is as credible as the claim that the Philippines will have its first submarine soon," Ejercito said in a statement issued yesterday.

She said she and the members of her family had "pledged" to remain here until "our final days."

Reached by phone last night at his

LAARNI/ A13

JOAN BONDOC

LOI EJERCITO: First, they wanted us to leave.

LAARNI ENRIQUEZ: Free to come and go

2 more escape plans fail

NOT the real thing: Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa holds up a bullet-riddled Kevlar helmet of inferior quality made in China during his press conference yesterday.
EDWIN BACASMAS

AFP official reveals Erap's aborted flights in Mindanao

BY CARLITO PABLO,
ARMAND NOCUM AND NAGIEL BAÑACIA

AFTER a foiled escape attempt on Friday, Joseph Estrada planned two other departures over the weekend—one from Cagayan de Oro to Hong Kong on Saturday, and another from Palawan to Palau on Sunday, a senior Armed Forces official claimed yesterday, citing military intelligence information.

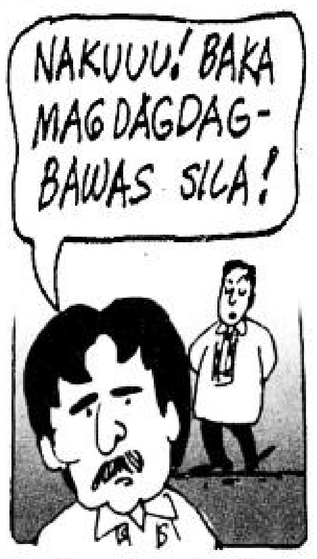
All the alleged plans to skip town were called off because of tight military security at airports in the South, said the official, who had earlier divulged Estrada's alleged attempt to leave the country on Friday.

The source also said that a jet owned by San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. landed and took off at least three times at the Davao City airport on Friday, the same day that Estrada allegedly attempted to flee to Indonesia from that airport.

The officer said that the perplexing and erratic landing and take-off pattern of the mysterious jet, as well as constant changes in the schedule of Estrada while campaigning for opposition senatorial bets in Mindanao, were indications that the deposed President was planning to leave the country.

"The flights of the jet seemed touch-and-go . . . (the plane) would land but depart suddenly," the source said.

2 MORE/ A13


NAKUUU! BAKA MAG DAGDAG-BAWAS SILA!

Look who's afraid of 'dagdag-bawas'

BY JULIET L. JAVELLANA

LOOK who's afraid of "*dagdag-bawas* (vote padding and shaving)" now.

Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan yesterday called a press conference to voice fears that opposition senatorial candidates could fall victim to electoral fraud in the May 14 elections.

Honasan's statement prompted a sharp response from former Bulacan Gov. Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan, who considers himself a victim of

LOOK/ A13

'My rivals are involved in bigger AFP scams'

BY CARLITO PABLO

BREACHING the Armed Forces chain of command, Marine Lt. Gen. Edgardo Espinosa went directly to the Commander in Chief, President Macapagal-Arroyo, to secure permission to speak publicly on the alleged irregularities raised against him and the Marine Corps by former Navy chief Rear Adm. Guillermo Wong.

While Wong had been gagged by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Angelo Reyes, the Marine officer whom Ms Macapagal endearingly calls "Spine" came out swinging against his alleged detractors who, he intimated, were involved in bigger financial irregularities in the Armed Forces.

These include the diversion of millions of pesos in funds for the recruitment of militiamen belonging to the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Units (Cafgus), which falls under the jurisdiction of the AFP General Headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo.

"This will take away the burden from the President of defending me," Espinosa said by way of explaining why he called for a press conference in Quezon City yesterday.

"Ma'am, you don't have to defend me. I can defend myself," said Espinosa who was to have led a breakaway military to join the people at Edsa on Jan. 20 but had been preempted by Reyes on Jan. 19. Based on Wong's allegations, Espinosa and six other ranking military officers are now under investigation by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Espinosa, who's considered one of the top contenders for AFP chief of staff when Reyes retires on March 17, said allegations of corruption against him are being orchestrated by "a specific group of contenders who covet the plum post."

Yesterday, he hit back by casting suspicions on his alleged detractors, including Reyes.

"Where are the Cafgus?" Espinosa said. The AFP desk handling Cafgu affairs is one of the offices under Reyes' jurisdiction.

In an apparent allusion to Wong, Espinosa also questioned why the Navy is using "middlemen" for the

MY RIVALS/ A11

Kidnappings back, but PNP says not true

KIDNAP gangs once again terrorizing the Chinese-Filipino community, and some active duty policemen are engaged in the abductions, according to a leader of a citizens' anti-crime watchdog group.

But the Philippine National Police refuses to believe Teresita Ang-See, saying her claims were "politically motivated."

The head of the Citizens Action Against Crime said abduction cases had "risen dramatically" since President Macapagal was swept to power on Jan. 20 in the military-backed Edsa People Power II that ousted Joseph Estrada.

The outspoken CAAC leader said her group had monitored six kidnappings during a recent 12-day period.

Ang-See said the abductions

KIDNAPPINGS/ A11

PLUNDER CASES

Ombudsman asks court to lift order

BY MICHAEL LIM UBAC
AND ROCKY NAZARENO

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman yesterday asked the Supreme Court to lift a 30-day order that prevented it from filing criminal charges against ousted President Joseph Estrada with the Sandiganbayan.

Asked if the urgent motion had something to do with Estrada's attempt to flee the country, Ombudsman Aniano Desierto said, "it has to do with everything."

He said his office filed the motion to ensure that the high court's order "is lifted before we can set in motion the criminal proceedings."

Desierto explained that the Sandiganbayan could dismiss the charges if the order was still in effect.

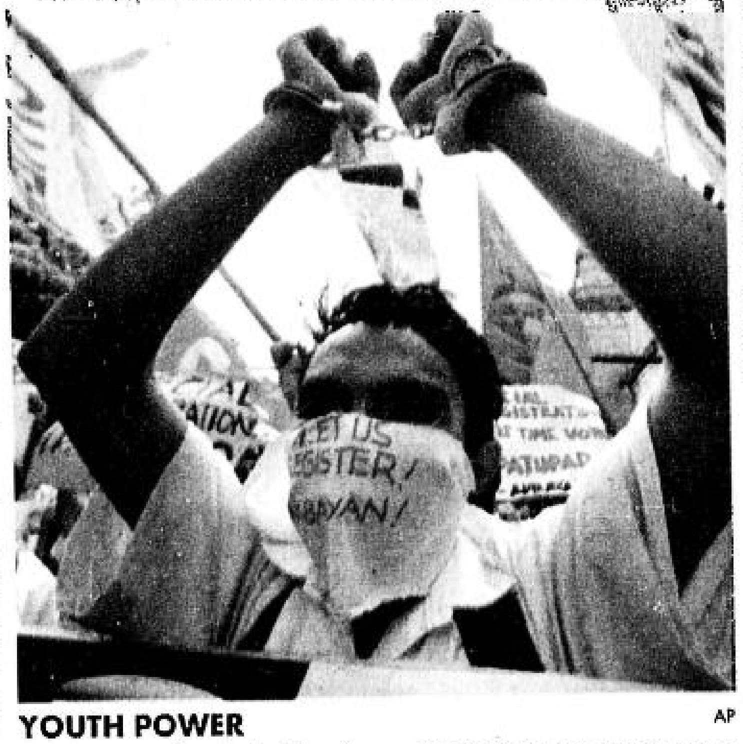
Estrada is facing seven complaints in the Ombudsman, including those for graft, bribery, plunder, malversation of public funds and falsification of public documents.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez announced that his office would file tomorrow another case of plunder against Estrada, bringing the number of plunder charges filed against him to eight.

Perez said the new plunder case is in connection with the P189.7 million in alleged kickbacks that Estrada got from purchases of stocks by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and Social Security System (SSS).

Perez said Estrada had pressured

OMBUDSMAN/ A13


LET US REGISTER! BAYAN!
AP

YOUTH POWER

Youth groups threaten to file a class suit if the Comelec will not hold a special registration for 4 million first-time voters. *(Story on Page A2.)*

Partisan policemen warned

BY ARMAND N. NOCUM

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she had ordered Deputy Director General Leandro Mendoza, acting chief of the Philippine National Police, to stop his men from aiding politicians running in the May 14 elections.

In a speech at the National ROTC Association Inc. convention at the Manila Hotel, the President said she had ordered Mendoza "to be very strict about electioneering, and that is why you have seen some headway."

She said it was in these times that active and reserve members of the police and the military—who are members of the organization—were again called to be "at the forefront of maintaining orderly and

PARTISAN/ A13

SALAMAT, MAKA-KABANGON NA RIN ANG PESO!

Stocks, peso up after ruling

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE FINANCIAL markets yesterday cheered the Supreme Court decision affirming the legitimacy of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration and pushed the peso up by almost 68 centavos, to P47.67 to the US dollar.

Share prices closed 1.2 percent higher yesterday as the 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index managed to breach its 1,600-point resistance to end at 19.57 points at 1,616.54, adding to last Friday's 1.7 percent gain.

Also aiding market sentiment was the favorable February inflation report released shortly before the market opened, which showed February consumer prices expanding 6.7 percent, better than economists' average forecast of 6.9 percent.

"There's now proof of life in the market, unlike before, when it felt like shares were being cast away by investors," said A&A Securities research head Astro del Castillo. "Confidence is slowly trickling back."

Given the favorable political and economic conditions, Del Castillo said the market may rise steadily toward the 1700-point level in coming sessions, especially after the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas indicated it is open to further policy rate cuts following the favorable inflation report.

Most traders believe the peso could strengthen further to P46.50 to $1 in the coming days although some believe yesterday's aggressive recovery may be short-lived.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the peso's strength remains largely influenced by regional factors. It was only the peso that posted gains yesterday while other currencies closed lower.

The peso opened at P47.80 to $1 and recovered some more toward the afternoon trade. Transactions reached a modest $114.5 million.

According to Romulo Neri, a professor of economics at the Asian Institute of Management, foreign portfolio and direct investments should start coming in after the Supreme Court ruling.

Neri, who also heads the Congressional Budget Planning Office, said things are looking bright for the Macapagal-Arroyo administration.

But he doubts that the peso could recover to P45 to $1 within the year. Neri believes a P45-P47 to $1 level would be good for both exporters and importers.

The weakening US and Japanese economy, both countries being strong trading partners of the Philippines, could halt growth in exports this year, said Neri.

The domestic economy is expected to compensate for this, which would pull up imports. The resulting weakness in exports and improved imports would prevent a strong recovery for the peso, Neri said.

"The rally in the foreign exchange could be short-lived because we are the only one in the region that has improved. A lasting recovery still hinges on solid reforms the government must put in place," said one trader.

Buenaventura acknowledged that the legitimacy issue had posed a mild threat on the peso last week.

"The decision is certainly welcome news and should provide stability in the financial markets," said Buenaventura.

The peso closed at P48.34 to $1 last Friday, 13 centavos stronger from the previous day's close of P48.47 to $1, the lowest level last week.

Traders last week feared that there would be a return to the P50 to $1 level in the run-up to the March 13 date earlier set by the Supreme Court to decide on the petition of ousted President Joseph Estrada questioning the legitimacy of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration. The outlook changed after the high court decision.

Economist Cayetano Paderanga Jr. agreed with Neri that the uncertainty caused by the Supreme Court petition had prompted a good number of foreign portfolio investors to hold back.

Paderanga is now the government's representative to the Asian Development Bank.

"The inflows suspended because of the uncertainty would now push through. The peso would definitely strengthen as a result," said Paderanga, adding that the peso's continued recovery would largely depend on what the BSP does.

He suspected, however, that the BSP would not allow the peso to strengthen dramatically since the export sector which benefits from a weaker peso has been the driving force of the economy.

Buenaventura said the central bank would let market forces dictate the direction of the currency. He pointed out that the peso could still be influenced by regional trends.

"Regional developments would continue to create an impact but we can safely say the domestic factors are out. We are no longer paying a political premium on our currency," he said.

With a report from AFP

Big 3 pledge to defer oil price hikes until May

By R.W. Domingo

APOSTOL

THE BIG THREE oil firms have promised not to raise fuel prices until after the May elections, newly appointed Philippine National Oil Co. Chair Sergio Apostol said yesterday.

Apostol said he met Friday with officials of Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Philippines Corp.—the three major players in the petroleum industry—and got them to accede to his request that they hold off any plans of hiking prices in the immediate future.

Apostol, former House prosecutor in the impeachment trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada, disclosed that he managed to talk with officials of the three firms because the PNOC chair exercised proxy rights over the government's 40-percent stake in Petron.

Apostol said he told the officials: "You're saying you've been losing for two years. Why can't you continue losing for (a few more) months?"

Apostol said the officials had no problem about complying with the request.

A stay in oil price hikes is deemed favorable to candidates in the administration's People Power Coalition, who will find themselves in the defensive should fuel prices be increased during the election campaign.

Earlier, Petron reported it incurred a net loss of P1.1 billion for the year 2000. Shell said it lost P1.06 billion while Caltex claimed a P1.9-billion loss.

Caltex raised its fuel prices by an average of five centavos per liter last month. Petron and Shell gave no indication of following suit.

For their part, members of the New Petroleum Players Association, through association president Fernando L. Martinez, said they were still studying the trend in world crude prices and had no immediate plans of raising prices.

Consumer and Oil Price Watch chair Raul T. Concepcion last week forecast a 19-centavo-per-liter increase in oil prices this month.

Youths threaten to sue Comelec

TWO youth groups belonging to larger civil society coalitions yesterday threatened to file a class suit against the Commission on Elections for refusing to hold a special registration for some four million first-time voters who failed to register before the deadline lapsed on Dec. 27.

Maricris Cabreros, spokesperson of the Akbayan-Youth, said the failure of the four million new voters to register on Dec. 27, 2000 was "primarily the fault of the Comelec."

"The lack of a comprehensive information campaign drive prevented the majority of the youth from knowing that there was an ongoing registration drive," Cabreros said.

She said only 282,482 of the 4.1 million new voters were able to beat the deadline.

She said members of the Akbayan-Youth and the Kompil II-Youth will file a class suit before the Supreme Court for having been deprived of the right of suffrage.

Cabreros said the Comelec committed a "grave constitutional error" by deciding on who can and who cannot vote.

The two groups yesterday filed a petition with the high tribunal questioning the constitutionality of the Comelec's decision not to hold a special registration. *Gerald Lacuarta*

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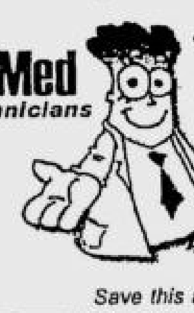
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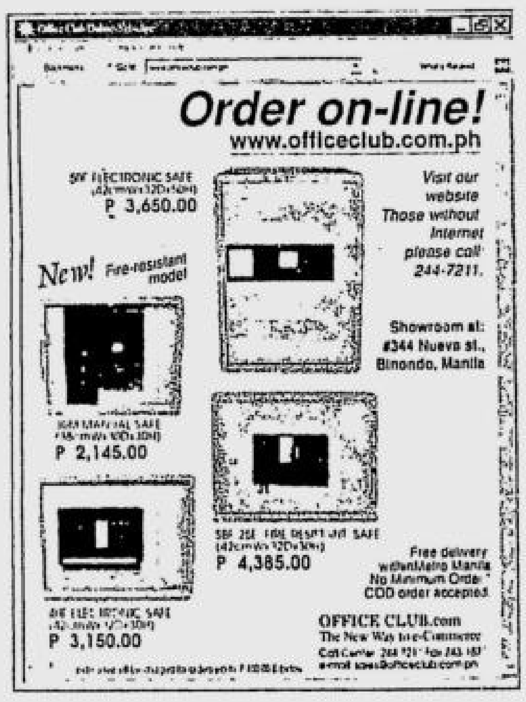
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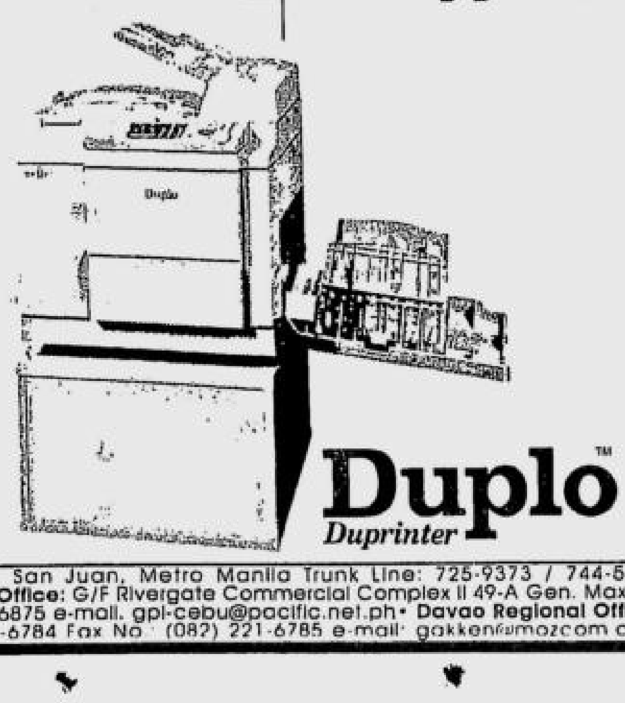
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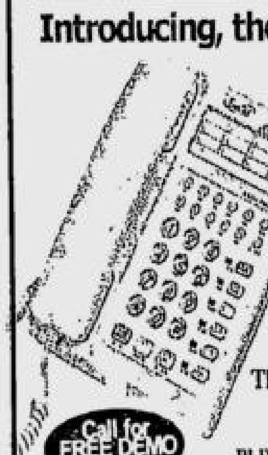
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Police raping women in jail and getting away with it—Amnesty

SYDNEY—Philippine authorities were urged by Amnesty International yesterday to try to prevent the rape of women in custody and end the impunity said to be enjoyed by law enforcement officers.

The human rights group said in a report that women were all too frequently raped or tortured while in custody, but rarely saw the perpetrators brought to justice.

Victims fear reprisals and those who do have the courage to make a complaint are often threatened or pressured into withdrawing them, especially if the perpetrator is in an influential position.

"Too often, police officers and prison guards in the Philippines abuse their power to rape and sexually abuse women in their custody," the human rights group said in a report released here.

"With the intent to humiliate, punish, or for their own sexual gratification, the perpetrators often get away with torture."

The report, launched by New South Wales state Gov. Marie Bashir, said intrusive media reporting of cases, lack of gender sensitivity in the courts, and by police, further compound the suffering of victims.

"The Philippine authorities must send an unequivocal message to law enforcement officials that sexual violence in custody will not be tolerated," the report added.

"The government should take urgent steps to end the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators."

It said the lack of prosecutions for torture, including rape, of women political detainees in the past, was a major factor contributing to a wider climate of impunity today.

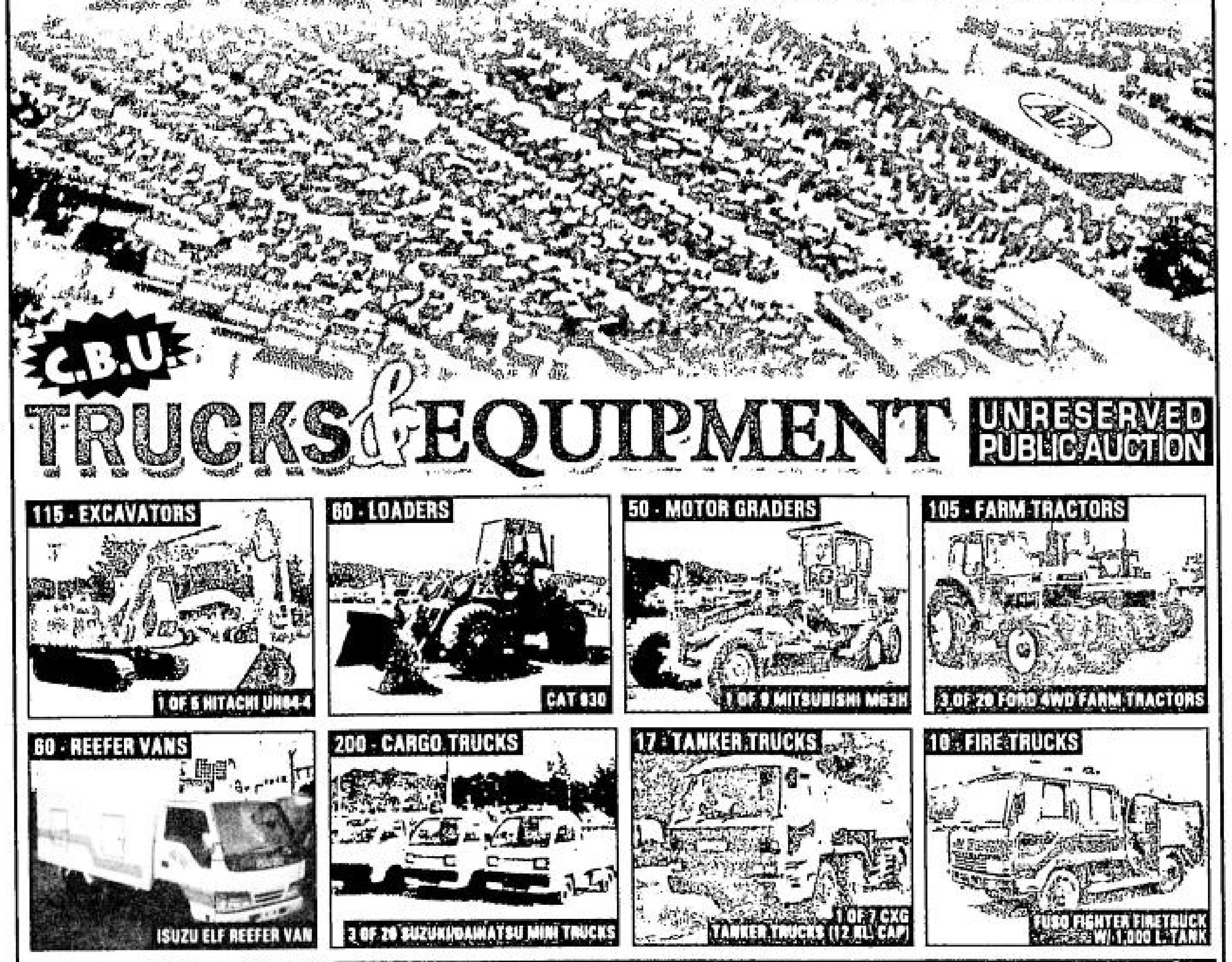
It cited the case of a male judge who in 1999 acquitted a policeman who raped a 13-year-old girl in Davao City.

The judge reportedly called the girl "a woman in a minor child's body, old in the ways of the world beyond her years... it is possible she concocted this lurid tale of lust and rape."

Women who are sexually abused or raped in custody were often members of marginalized groups including suspected prostitutes, street children, drug users and the poor arrested for minor crimes.

"The anti-vagrancy law is used as a pretext for arresting women arbitrarily and subjecting them to sexual abuse," the report said.

"Women in police custody have also reported being threatened, slapped, punched and kicked." *AFP*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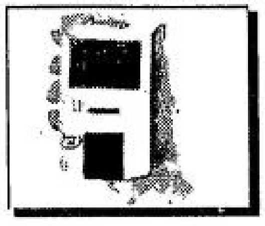
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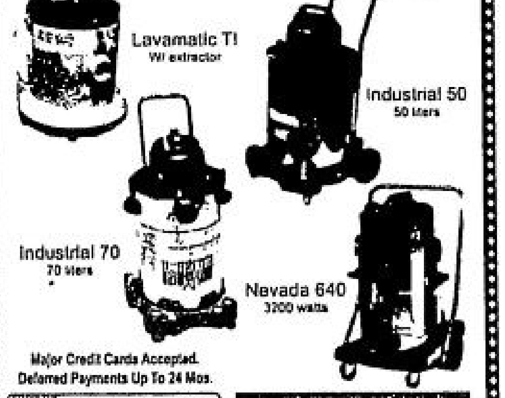
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PHILAMCARE TOP PRODUCERS 2000

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Rommel Tillah
Top Producer

Ma. Leonor Dy
2nd Top Producer

Renato Perez
3rd Top Producer

SPECIAL CITATIONS

Top Agency- Group Category

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2. Philamlife -Dy
3. Philamlife -Prism

Top Agency- Individual Category

1. Antonio Associates
2. Del Mundo Associates
3. Uson Associates

Top Unit Managers-Individual Category

1. Basilisa Montoya (Nicdao)
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Antonio Associates

Rookie of the Year
Lidia Vilar

Indeed, the power of people to work towards one common goal and achieve great things is always dramatic and overwhelming.

Not only have we seen such display of human drama in the struggles and triumphs of our country, I am proud to say that we too have shining examples of human perseverance within our own company, PhilamCare. For in our midst are the men and women who have worked unceasingly, labored tirelessly toward the goals our company has set for itself.

An act worthy of our admiration and adulation.

Their efforts and struggles have put PhilamCare at the helm of the health care maintenance industry. Not only are they inspiring examples, in them also lives the trail-blazing spirit of PhilamCare's founders who in 1982 pioneered the concept of health care maintenance in the Philippines.

Our 19 years in the industry tells of PhilamCare's devotion to afford Filipinos the best health care possible. By providing excellent products with the widest range of benefits and offering quality service, we only hope to have served the people, if not the country, through these humble efforts.

The Board of Directors and Management join me in congratulating the men and women who have worked together towards achieving PhilamCare's goals and vision. You have our deepest gratitude and admiration for a job excellently done.

Now I rally you on, let's move forward toward another great year for PhilamCare!

Mr. Jose L. Cuisia, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

PHILAMCARE HITS 2000 TARGET

Jesus D. Quiazon, President and CEO of PhilamCare (Far right) looks with pride as Mr. Robert J. Williams, President and CEO of UnitedHealthCare and PhilamCare Chairman of the Board, Mr. Jose L. Cuisia, Jr. congratulates one another for another outstanding performance in year 2000. At far left is Mr. John Fenlason, GMD Global Deputy Director, AIG. Photo taken after the Annual Stockholder's Meeting at the Philamlife Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

The stage is set as the drama of success unfolds right before you as a handful of our best performers for the year 2000 receive their recognition for a job well done.

Needless to say, they won't just take centerstage, they'll definitely steal the show simply because they have played major roles in making PhilamCare the leading company in the health care scenario. Thanks to their outstanding and spectacular performances, they have succeeded in building our brand to be one the strongest among Filipino consumers. Today, more and more people can reap benefits from PhilamCare's extensive and comprehensive product line. So much so that we have become a company integral to Filipino lives.

Now that's an act that truly puts them in the spotlight!

So we thank our best performing men and women of 2000. You have not only capped the year with quite a climactic ending, you have inspired others to do their best for the coming year just as well. For that, you not only deserve our applause. You deserve a standing ovation.

For 2001...encore, encore!

Ms. Rowena Bueno-Cruz
Exec. Vice President
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Political prisoners freed

THE FIRST batch of political prisoners ordered released by President Macapagal-Arroyo stepped into the light of freedom yesterday.

Eight detainees—of the 73 ordered released by Ms Macapagal last month—went straight from the National Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City to the militant group Bayan's office in Quezon City for a "welcome home" party given by their families and friends.

While grateful for their freedom, the prisoners demanded the release of all their jailed colleagues throughout the country.

"I don't know whether I should be happy," said Rolleto Arquillano, one of the freed prisoners, "there are still many others who were left behind."

Released were, aside from Anquillano, Amancio Mesario, Danilo Navasquez, Manuel Isetada, Tomas Brusas, Romilo Ma-pinhag, Alberto Beron and Oscar Oliva.

Militant groups lauded Malacañang for approving the release of the prisoners.

Rafael Mariano, Bayan chair, said the release set the government in the "right direction" but he challenged Ms Macapagal to release the rest of the estimated 250 political detainees throughout the country.

Officials have urged communist rebels to return the government's goodwill gesture by freeing two longtime prisoners, Army Maj. Noel Buan and police Supt. Abelardo Martin. *With Rocky Nazareno, Andrea Trinidad-Echavez and AP*

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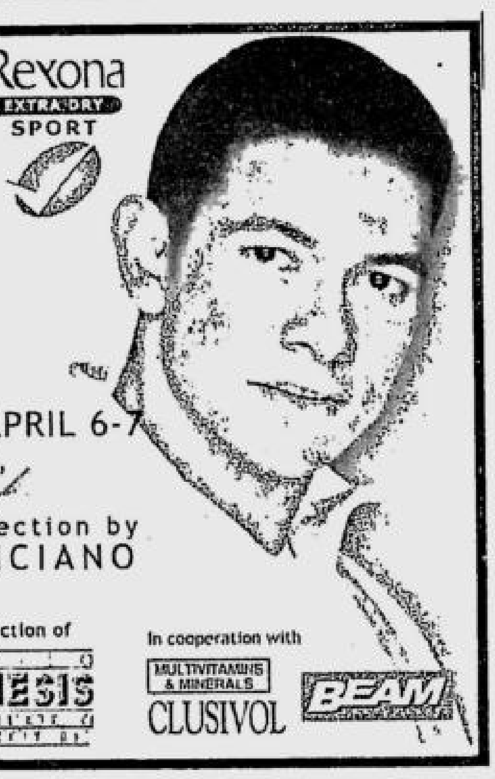

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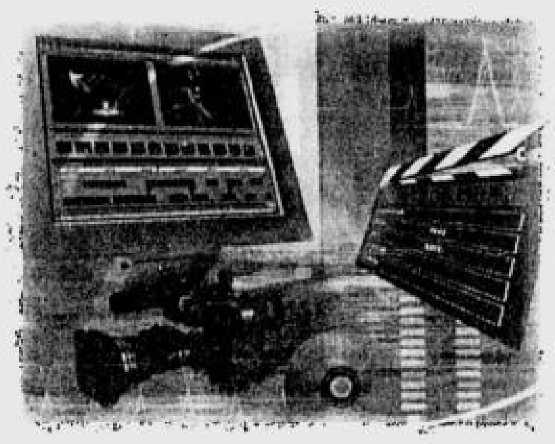

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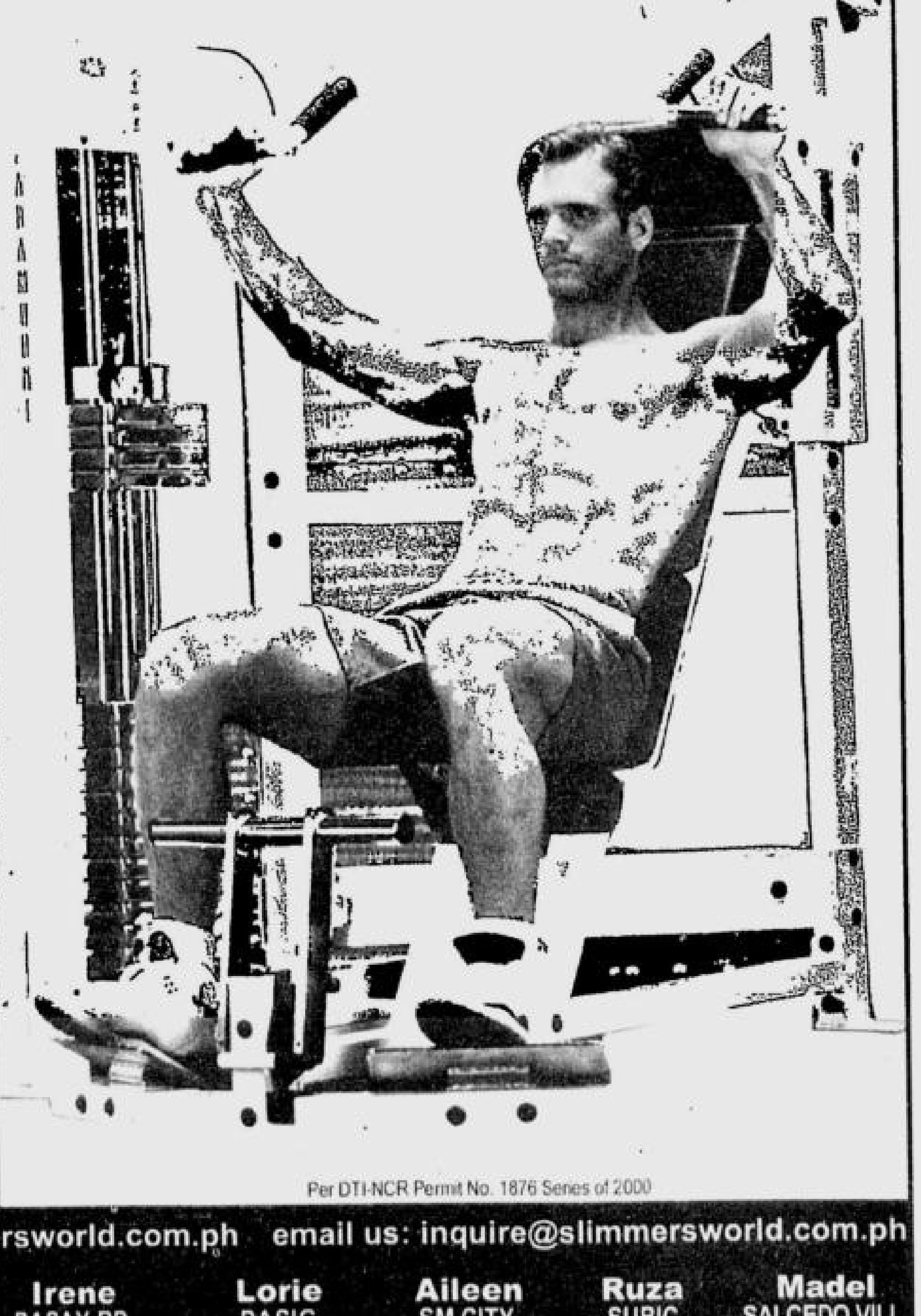

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OPINION

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Vol. 16 No. 88
ISSN
0116-2642

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The PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati • P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati City, Philippines • Our new telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments; Editorial Fax 897-4793, 897-4794; Advertising 897-4807; Circulation 527-33-42, 527-33-46, 528-01-83, 528-01-86 and 528-02-13, Fax: 528-02-34.

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A formal closure

EDITORIAL

THE SUPREME Court having rendered a decision rejecting former President Joseph Estrada's claim of immunity from suit, the ball is now in the Ombudsman's court. Ombudsman Aniano Desierto will have to do a delicate balancing act. On one hand, there are the People Power II forces urging him to speed up the trial of the cases against Estrada. On the other hand, there is the Supreme Court urging the Ombudsman to move with deliberation on the Estrada cases and ensure a "circus-free atmosphere."

The Ombudsman cannot start hearings immediately because he will have to wait out the 15-day period given to Estrada to file a motion for reconsideration. After that the defense can be expected to file other motions that could delay the start of the inquiry. At this point it is doubtful whether the Supreme Court will reverse itself unless a new, strong argument is presented on behalf of former President Estrada.

We don't see any conflict between civil society's urging that the investigation and trial of former President Estrada be hastened and the Supreme Court's advice for the Ombudsman to proceed with caution and deliberation. The Supreme Court itself showed that it can act fast if it has a mind to. It set a deadline of March 13 for itself to act on Estrada's petition but reached a decision on March 3, or 10 days before its deadline.

The Ombudsman, if he has a mind to, can also act speedily on the Estrada cases. These are the cases that the people are waiting for—these are the cases that the nation wants to be resolved as soon as possible. How the Ombudsman will act on these cases will show if he is sincere in his declaration that he is going after the big fish. So far convictions have been obtained in minor cases involving minor government officials. Now, here is the Big Fish—a former president accused of graft and corruption, plunder, betrayal of the public trust and violation of the Constitution.

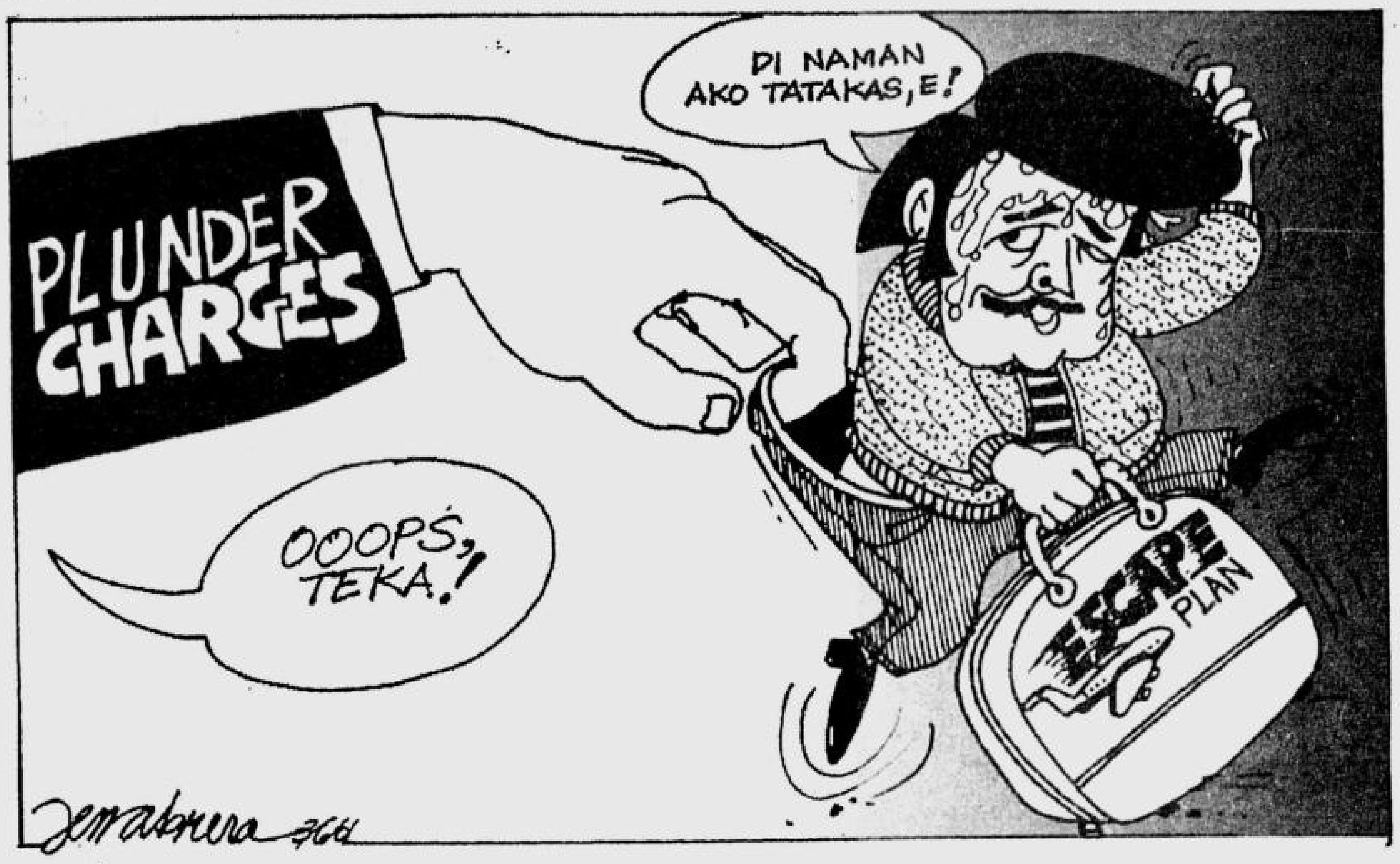
In the meantime, it would be prudent for the Ombudsman to follow the Supreme Court's so-called "gag order." But we don't mean he should keep completely silent. Occasionally he may answer queries from media, but he should not make it a daily routine to produce something for the front pages of newspapers or the prime-time newscasts of TV. He will need all the time he has to build up the cases against Estrada, although a lot of evidence collected by the House and private prosecutors in the Senate impeachment trial has been turned over to him.

On the Supreme Court's suggestion that the proceedings be held in a "circus-free atmosphere," the Ombudsman, as prosecutor, and the Sandiganbayan, as a court, have all the power to ensure that the hearings are conducted in an orderly and dignified manner. They have the power to lay down rules and the power to cite people for contempt. But we hope that they will not be so strict as to curtail media coverage of the historic investigation and trial.

The Senate showed that it could be done in the impeachment trial of then President Estrada. The Senate trial was informative and educational. For many people it was an eyeopener on the function of the Senate as a trial court. Similarly, opening the investigation and trial of the president to live TV coverage could be very informative and educational for the people.

The trial has to be conducted with utmost transparency. If and when it finally comes to pass, it will be the first trial of a Philippine president for serious crimes. People will be interested in it, the way they were interested in the Senate impeachment trial. Not all the hundreds or thousands of people who would like to watch the trial in the courtroom can be accommodated within its cramped confines. It would be a good idea to televise the proceedings, subject, of course, to certain guidelines to ensure "a circus-free atmosphere."

The Senate impeachment trial ended without a formal closure, although it is said that the people themselves provided the closure in Edsa People Power II. It was an informal and political closure. Now, the Ombudsman and the Sandiganbayan will have the opportunity, finally, to give a formal, legal closure to the Estrada case.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PLUNDER CHARGES
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ESCAPE PLAN

Save Quezon Avenue trees by modifying plans

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THIS morning at the Department of Public Works and Highways, several government agencies and environmental groups will sign a memorandum of agreement to save trees on Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, that will otherwise be massacred to give way to a P393.80-million interchange at the corner of Edsa and Quezon Avenue. According to this agreement, trees originally planned to be cut will instead be balled and transplanted and adopted by tree lovers. Very good, I said yesterday.

But as I was looking at today's program, I discovered that 192 trees would still be cut; 70 of which are 50- to 90-year-old mahogany trees. A total of 248 trees will be balled and transplanted. Only 106 trees will be retained at the project site.

This is not good enough. In fact, there is no change in the number of trees to be retained. The only change is that 80 trees scheduled to be cut would be balled instead and transplanted. The mortality rate for transplanted trees is at least 10 percent, much more for trees this big. Worse, the tree massacre will go beyond Agham Road, perhaps until the Quezon Memorial Park. In short, the memorandum of agreement looks good in the news but in fact, few trees would be saved. The number of casualties would still be intolerable.

Why do the trees have to be sacrificed? Because, Quezon Avenue would be widened and the line of trees on both sides of the street are in the way. Although I don't understand why the palm trees on the center island, which are not in the way, would also be sacrificed.

But since the signatories (DPWH, DENR, MMDA, Earthsavers Movement and NIPA) would still talk before the signing ceremony, may I suggest a little change to save the trees.

Instead of mowing down the trees to widen the street, why not retain the present lines of trees as side islands on both sides and carve out two service roads beyond the trees. Thus, there will be three islands: the center island with the palms and a side island on each side with the mahogany trees. Quezon Avenue, from Edsa to the Quezon Memorial Park, would be much more beautiful, with three straight lines of trees leading the eye to the towering Quezon Monument.

There would be no problem of space because lands along both sides of Quezon Avenue are government-owned. To the left from Edsa facing east to the Park, are the Manila Seedling Bank Foundation which has already given up a 7-meter-wide strip to the project. Beyond Agham Road is the big compound of the Children's Hospital and beyond that the Ninoy Aquino Park. To the right is the compound of the National Power Corp.; across Agham Road to the right is government land filled with squatters and, beyond that, the compound of the Lung Center. Thus, being state-owned land, there should be no problem in acquiring them for the road widening.

The issue is that it took God 50 to 90 years to make those trees grow that big. They are irreplaceable. Even if the DPWH replace each tree with 100 tree seedlings, it would take another 50 to 90 years for them to grow as big as the trees that would be sacrificed. Most of the state-owned land, on the other hand, are idle.

To see for yourself what we will lose if the plans for the interchange are not modified, stand in the middle of Quezon Avenue facing east toward the Quezon Monument. You will see the three straight lines of trees standing like sentinels at attention on each side and in the center of the street.

The trees are especially beautiful now because they are budding. New shoots and leaves are bursting out of the bare branches so that the trees have a light green tint as if it is spring in the Philippines. Other trees are still shedding their leaves as if it is autumn. When they are fully bare, it would be like winter minus the cold, because by then it would be the peak of summer. When the mahogany trees bloom and their fruits ripen and pop to disgorge their contents, you would see tiny helicopters whirling down from the trees to the street below. They are the seeds which God, in His wonderful ingenuity, provided with tiny helicopter blades so that, after leaving their mother trees, they can fly great distances, land, take root, and spread and propagate their species. Considering how God made such ingenious preparation to make sure that their numbers increase, how can we, who are also His creations, kill them in great numbers?

* * *

To prove that this is God's intention, look at a map of Quezon City. On the opposite side of Quezon Memorial Park, Quezon Avenue turns into Commonwealth Avenue which runs in an almost straight line to La Mesa Dam with its tree-choked watershed.

Commonwealth is now being widened. There is enough space on both sides for a cycling/jogging/walking path from the Quezon Memorial Park to La Mesa Dam. Thus, the two parks would be connected to be the main parks of Quezon City.

Plant mahogany trees between the edge of Commonwealth Avenue to La Mesa. The trees would shade the cyclists and joggers from the hot sun. Won't that make Quezon City, which President Manuel L. Quezon planned as the nation's capital, a beautiful and healthful city with many trees to cleanse the polluted air and provide oxygen for our lungs?

For such a big city, Quezon City has no main park to compare with Manila's Rizal Park. It has only the tiny, tiny Quezon Memorial Park that has been transformed into a flea market and a parking lot for discarded container vans. The only sizable greenbelt left is the La Mesa watershed. Let us preserve, develop and use it.

Peace dividend

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I SAW my favorite peacenik the other day. Nandy Pacheco is looking as fit as ever. I once read a sign at a dentist's waiting room that said the secret of youth was liking what you were doing, and Nandy seems to have found it. He has been indefatigable in pushing for gun control in this country, and has done so amid the greatest adversity. He has been cursed, maligned and threatened, but he has persevered in his mission in the profound belief that it is his Christian duty to see it through. Next time the Nobel people come around to cite Filipinos for their contribution to peace, they might want to cast a glance in his direction.

Nandy has liked what he is doing, despite its monumental travails. And it shows. But he has a special reason to exult these days. Pulse Asia has just confirmed what he has known in his heart all along. Most Filipinos are alarmed at the proliferation of guns in this country and want something done about it. In a national survey during the last quarter of last year, Pulse Asia discovered that 83 percent of Filipinos above 18 favor gun control. Specifically, they want only the authorities to carry guns—and only when they are in uniform.

Nandy feels vindicated. But more than feeling vindicated, he feels compelled to bring this to the attention of the public, particularly by way of the elections. The people have spoken, he says with fervor. And he cannot see why the candidates, if only as a matter of latching on to a popular cause, shouldn't make a platform out of this. There is a way of improving peace and order in this country, he wants them to say, and that is by gun control. There is a way of improving peace itself in this country, he wants them to say, which is by spreading the culture of nonviolence.

My sympathies are with Nandy completely, and I do hope some of the candidates, if not all of them, will pick up his cause and make it theirs as well.

I do feel strongly that this country deserves to get a huge peace dividend from People Power II. People Power II, like People Power I, was a victory over a macho presidency. One would imagine that it would be a victory as well over all that that macho presidency represented: a predisposition to violence, a preference for war as the first option to settle conflict, a belief in guns, the death penalty and torturing or "salvaging" suspects as ways to stop crime. A macho culture, in sum. It would be a pity if we won the battle only to lose the war. If we won against a macho president only to see the culture he thrived in rule us afterward.

A crusade such as that being waged by Nandy should help to prevent it, or push it back mightily. But I myself would go further to advocate a renewed campaign for the observance of human rights. You talk of spreading a culture of peace, you're talking inevitably of assuring the reign of human rights. Taking guns away from the hands of the murderous is well and fine, but filling the hearts and minds of the citizens with the need to show respect for each another is so much better. Gun control is the pound of cure for rampant violence in this country—and make no mistake about it, we are a violent country notwithstanding our successes in mounting bloodless revolutions—human rights are the ounce of prevention that weighs more than the cure. I myself would like to see the People Power Coalition candidates pitch human rights aggressively in their campaign. But I don't know why we shouldn't keep fighting for this long after the elections.

I did say before that the fact that a macho president has been replaced by a woman, which happened in both People Power I and People Power II, is not a guarantee the machismo would go away. It did not in Aquino's time, it got worse. Human rights were the first casualties of Aquino's rule, "salvaged" by the brain-eating cultists, the Kalibapi-type hooded vigilantes, the torturers and murderers in uniform who were recycled from criminals into heroes. Before we knew it, we had an order that saw war as the solution to the gripes of the poor, that saw human rights as an impediment to peace and order, that saw guns, checkpoints and extra-judicial killings as ways to stop crime. Before we knew it, we were back to where we started.

That was what caused not just peace and justice to disappear from the horizon but peace and order itself to vanish from this benighted land. I've always maintained this thesis that the path to peace and justice is the same path to peace and order for the simple reason that the lack of both owes to the same source: the absence of human rights. It was the shunting aside of human rights during Aquino's time that sowed the seeds of a new tyranny and raised in its wake a breed of law enforcers no better than the law-breakers they proposed to crush. That raised law enforcers like Alfredo Lim, who believed human rights did not apply to human wrongs and proceeded to paint the residences of suspected drug pushers red, like the Passover, and Panfilo Lacson, who believed that putting criminals away by any means was good and got away with massacring a bunch of people who went by the notorious name, Kuratong Baleleng.

To this day, I do not know how both have passed themselves off as agents of the law. They are not part of the enforcement, they are part of the violation. It is not merely that their solution to crime trades off peace and justice for peace and order, it is that their solution to crime sacrifices both. At the very least, that is so because crime is not solved by fascist methods, it thrives on it. It festers on it, the way vampires fester in the dark. What kills vampires is not more darkness, it is daylight. What kills crime are not criminal responses, it is an enlightened environment. At the very most, that it so because it turns law enforcers into criminals themselves. A law enforcement agency that is not bound by the ways of the law does not enforce the law for very long. It turns to gambling, drugs and extortion—as the PNP has. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. Criminal methods make for criminals.

It's time we did something about this. It's time we won not just peace and justice but peace and order after our victory over Erap. It's time we enforced the strict observance of human rights in this country. Remember: Weaklings love guns, tough guys don't. Cowards are warmongers, heroes are peace-lovers. Boys don't cry, real men do.

50 positions in SolGen's office unfilled due to poor pay

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

DURING A recent chat with Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo, he stressed that now that the Supreme Court has ruled on President Macapagal's legitimacy and that her predecessor is not immune to lawsuits for his unofficial acts, such as plunder, there is a need to sustain the momentum over those cases against the ousted President. People Power Coalition senatorial candidate Joker Arroyo echoed the same thinking. He said those cases against Estrada ought to be filed and the people ought to be made aware of them, as this is the only way they would be educated about those plunder cases. This is election time and a lot of our people can still be so easily regaled by entertainers and sob stories about being wronged men and women.

Now is the time for various people's organizations to go down to the level of the masses and discuss the issues with them. There are suggestions from many citizens for organizations such as the Couples for Christ to take to the grassroots in addressing crucial political issues. Don't campaign among the middle class as they understand what has happened. It's the *masa* that needs to be addressed.

* * *

Solicitor General Marcelo told this columnist that he sees the serious need to create by legislation a special prosecutor's office to handle the cases against Estrada, so that they could move faster. The SolGen says such an office is necessary inasmuch as his office has to divide its time between the celebrated cases and those that he calls, perhaps for lack of a better term, "ordinary cases." Marcelo says he now understands the problems that his predecessor Frank Chavez faced before, when he had to handle the Marcos and cronies' cases in the early Aquino years, in addition to the "ordinary cases" reaching the SolGen's office.

Perhaps some legislators could sit down with Marcelo on this idea of creating a special office to prosecute the Marcos-Estrada cases.

* * *

Happily, there are private citizens' groups raising funds to finance the expenses of private lawyers who will help out in the cases vs Estrada. Two of those groups jointly raising funds are the militant Concerned Women of the Philippines, led by its president, Dr. Evelyn Kilayko, and Konsyensiyang Pilipino, led by its executive director, Tessie Daza-Baltazar. They have put up Piso-Piso Para sa Katarungan at Katototohanan, and you readers can send in your contributions to their joint office at 265-C Katipunan Road, Loyola Heights, with tel./fax no. 929-6188 or 426-6181.

Another group raising funds for the private lawyers is the Council on Philippine Affairs, led by Star columnist Teddy Benigno.

* * *

Solicitor General Marcelo also wishes that private initiative in the Estrada prosecution, which became so valuable during the impeachment trial, would not slacken, as the Solicitor General's Office needs the help of those private prosecutors. The trouble, says Marcelo, is that his office is gravely understaffed: right now there are 50 vacant positions there which have not been filled up yet. The reason is that there are few takers owing to the low pay the SolGen's office offers, compared to a lucrative private law practice. The judiciary has been encountering a similar problem: some 30 percent of the bench is understaffed for the same reason—the poor pay for the judges.

Unfortunately, poor pay not only affects motivation and morale, but it also encourages corruption. Congress has to address this problem.

* * *

Few know that the only private lawyer for President Macapagal in the legitimacy case that was recently ruled upon by the Supreme Court was former Senate President Jovito Salonga. At the recent first anniversary celebration of Bantay Katarungan, which the two tireless senior citizens, Salonga and former Solicitor General Sedfrey Ordonez, founded, Ms Macapagal, who was the keynote speaker, approached Salonga to ask him to help her in that case. Ms Macapagal recalled at that occasion how it was her father, President Diosdado Macapagal, who had convinced the young topnotcher-lawyer from Harvard-Yale to enter politics.

* * *

Thus, Salonga became the special collaborating counsel in the team that involved five officials from the Department of Justice and five from the Solicitor General's Office. The team prepared the joint memorandum reply, with Salonga contributing plenty to the arguments against immunity for Estrada. Coordinating with Salonga were two young lawyers, Justice Undersecretary Manuel "Dondi" Teehankee, the late Chief Justice Dingdong Claudio's son, and Solicitor Luciano Joson Jr., son of Salonga's law classmate, retired Sandiganbayan Justice Luciano Joson Sr. Said Teehankee, "it was an honor for us young lawyers to sign the same page as this legal luminary."

* * *

One PPC senatorial candidate this column heartily endorses is former three-term Bulacan Gov. Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan, who was cheated out of his Senate victory in the 1998 elections through *dagdag-bawas*. Electing him this time would be a matter of justice for this decent human being, but more than that, Obet is so familiar with the workings of the local governments, having been three times president of the League of Governors. Thus, he knows all about empowering the LGUs and plugging the loopholes in their charters to make them a vibrant component of our society. As governor of Bulacan Obet, a very successful executive in a multinational firm before Cory Aquino tapped him as OIC in 1986, made cooperativism a byword in his province.

* * *

The *jueteng* network in Region II has been shaken to its roots recently with the joint campaign to eradicate it, undertaken by the fearless Bishop of Bayombong, Ramon Villena, co-president of the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference, and the regional PNP director, Gen. Rouland Albano. Bishop Villena has consistently warred on politicians and police agents who have protected *jueteng* operators and profited from collections. He has gone to the extent of turning down contributions of *jueteng* lords to the building of a badly needed seminary in Vizcaya. I have long admired this bishop's uncompromising stand against pornography, *jueteng* and other vices of society.

* * *

Recently, at a social gathering to which my husband and I were invited by Isabela Rep. Heherson Alvarez, we met PNP Region II chief Albano. He related how he had caused the administrative relief of some 21 chiefs of police in his region, due to their failure to eradicate *jueteng*. He says this clean-up was made possible due to the support of local politicians like Sonny Alvarez and the dutiful performance of Police Senior Supt. James Melad of Isabela, and Police Supt. Ricardo Padilla of Cagayan, Romeo Hilomen of Nueva Vizcaya and Rodolfo Tutaan of Quirino, and other PNP officers.

Now that this scourge has dried up in Region II, Albano stressed, however, that he will give the ousted police chiefs another chance to prove themselves. But if *jueteng* still continues, then he will relieve not just them but also their immediate superiors, the provincial directors.

A night of songs and memories

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IT was to be a night of memories and songs, they promised, and the friends, comrades, supporters and admirers of Rock Tiglao in the women's movement didn't fail us—or her.

We gathered for a two-part get-together. The first, a ritual of blessing and parting, the highlight of which was a request to write down our own commitments and resolutions in the wake of Rock's own exemplary involvement with and love for the cause of women. We dropped the little pieces of paper into a glass jar, with the understanding that these would be burned alongside Rock's remains at the cremation.

After a dinner break, it was on with the show! There was singing, laughing, crying, poetry reading, fond recollections of the woman, friend, co-worker, activist, counselor and wife and mother that Rock had been and still is. Friends from UP and Kalayaan, the feminist organization that she helped found, recalled a young student with a sharp and courageous tongue but even sharper analysis and thinking on the country's situation. Co-workers and clients from the Women's Crisis Center remembered a woman of extraordinary gifts for understanding and counseling. And friends spoke movingly of a woman who opened her home, her larder and her heart to anyone who might come calling for comfort, advice or just a ready ear. Most movingly, they spoke of Rock's final moments, when the only regret she gave voice to was that of leaving her husband Bobi and their children.

Before this "women's night" for Rock, a friend told me of how Rock had, with humor, described the gradual way by which cancer had taken hold of her body. "All my conceits have been taken away," she said. A brain tumor had replaced her bright smile with a lopsided grin. Breast cancer had led to the removal of her breasts. Chemotherapy caused her hair to fall out. But as everyone testified that night, Rock's beauty shone from somewhere deep inside her, a beauty and strength that grew ever more beautiful because it was shared.

* * *

IT'S the season for proms, high school dances and the like, descending on my own nuclear family precipitately, such that the hubby and I have yet to fully assess the implications of its coming on our own lives.

Our daughter has just gone to her first school dance.

We'd seen it coming weeks before, when the first of the written notices from school was handed to us. First, there was a temporary reprieve. I had signed the consent form but shortly after she informed us that she had changed her mind, since none of her friends would be joining her. While I reminded her that she already had our permission and that she'd been so looking forward to it, secretly I was relieved.

Well, the situation shifted radically a few days after. Her friends and classmates had changed their minds, and now they had elaborate plans for a big weekend. After the dance, she and her friends were going to stay overnight at her friend Nina's, then they would all go malling the next day. We were "informed" of these plans, note, and what parent could have the heart to object in the face of such cheery enthusiasm?

Then the full implications of the affair hit us. "When are we going to buy my dress for the dance?" she asked innocently. "First you don't even want to go to the dance, now you even want to buy a new dress!" I objected. When I pointed out that she had dresses she'd worn only once, though, she readily agreed that any one would do fine. "But what about shoes?" After deciding what dress to wear, she found a matching pair that was supposed to belong to me but which she'd appropriated. But one issue remained unresolved: "What do I do with my hair?"

* * *

SATURDAY afternoon, a time for testing came. For me. It was deadline time and yet the dance was but a few hours away. "Ma, I thought we were going to the parlor?" she pleaded, even as I was driving toward the INQUIRER offices where I planned to write my Sunday column. "Can your *kuya* drive you there?" I asked. "Yes…but I don't know what to tell them, I don't even know what I want for my hair!"

My daughter was old enough to go to a "mixed" dance, apparently, but not too old not to need her mother's moral support.

At the parlor, two other young women were primping for their own school affair, endlessly worrying about the right hairstyle, the color of their nail polish, the most flattering eye shadow. Nora, our neighborhood beautician, kept busy flitting from one girl to another, counseling, propping up sagging egos, tactfully suggesting changes. Watching them, including my daughter, I was thankful for having survived that phase of my own life, when other people's opinions of you seemed to hinge on the most trivial but essential of things: the right "look," the right dress, the right shade of lipstick. But also, I felt a wave of nostalgia for that time of beginnings and possibilities. How exciting it all seems.

Unfortunately, the story ends here. We saw her drive off with her *kuya* to the dance (for once our son accepted the duty with alacrity, having planned a big night out for himself, with our car). The next day, we probed and questioned gently, knowing only too well how parents who push too far the boundaries of their curiosity get it back in the form of a sullen child.

For now, I am content with her account of events summed up by a texting exchange when, after the hubby and I treated ourselves to a movie, I texted her: "Wer r u?" She texted back: "*Paalis pa lang sa* dance." "Ok, have fun?" I asked. "*Syempre,*" she replied.

What half a century can do

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

QUITE a number of women from my generation didn't bother to burn their bras but they pretty much decided without necessarily broadcasting it that they wouldn't take any c… from their beloved dearly or otherwise. Consequently quite a number of them ended up divorced and remarried, some more than once. The role of silent suffering martyr no longer appealed. Neither did they care to be described as *masyadong mabait*. Despite having been taught that suffering was good for the soul they may have preferred to believe that suffering is a matter of choice.

A friend sent me an article contrasting the housewives of the '50s and the modern homemaker taken from "an actual 1950's Home Economics textbook intended for high school girls, teaching them how to prepare for married life." Now you can understand where the phrase "Lord and Master" came from and it has little to do with the bible.

HAVE DINNER READY: Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal—on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him, and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospects of a good meal are part of the warm welcome needed.

PREPARE YOURSELF: Take 15 minutes to rest so you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.

CLEAR AWAY CLUTTER: Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives, gathering up school books, toys, paper, etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too.

PREPARE THE CHILDREN: Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces if they are small, comb their hair, and if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.

MINIMIZE THE NOISE: At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of washer, dryer or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Greet him with a warm smile and kiss letting him know you're glad to see him.

SOME DON'TS: Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain if he's late for dinner. Count this as minor compared with what he might have gone through that day.

MAKE HIM COMFORTABLE: Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or suggest he lay down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Allow him to relax and unwind.

LISTEN TO HIM: You may have a dozen things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first.

MAKE THE EVENING HIS: Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or to other places of entertainment; instead try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his need to be home and relax.

THE GOAL: Try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can relax.

WELCOME TO 2000

HAVE DINNER READY: Make reservations ahead of time. If your day becomes too hectic just leave him a voice mail message regarding where you'd like to eat and at what time. This lets him know that your day has been crappy and gives him an opportunity to change your mood. (There are also dozens of restaurants that deliver. Keep numbers and menus handy.)

PREPARE YOURSELF: Make sure to change out of your work clothes into something comfortable. Who cares if he likes it or not—after all, it's most likely his T-shirt and boxers.

CLEAR AWAY CLUTTER: Yeah right! Tell the kids and your husband if they want maid service, they better call one! (Now aren't we the lucky ones in this country?)

PREPARE THE CHILDREN: Send the children to their rooms to watch television or play Nintendo.

MINIMIZE THE NOISE: Yell to him over the loud music your kids are playing, that this is what you had to put up with while he was gone. And mention that it was his decision to buy the kids a new CD player in the first place. (Chances are the noise is coming from the sports program on cable that he's watching anyway.)

SOME DON'TS: Don't greet him with problems and complaints. Let him speak first, and then your complaints will get more attention and remain fresh in his mind throughout dinner. Don't complain if he's late for dinner, simply remind him that the leftovers are in the fridge.

MAKE HIM COMFORTABLE: Tell him where he can find a blanket if he's cold. This will really show him you care.

LISTEN TO HIM: But don't ever let him get the last word.

MAKE THE EVENING HIS: Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or other places of entertainment; go with a friend or go shopping (use his credit card). Familiarize him with the phrase, "Girls' Night Out!"

THE GOAL: Try to keep things amicable without reminding him that he only thinks the world revolves around him. Obviously he's wrong, it revolves around you.

Memories of my 'lola'

YOUNGBLOOD

Rhanchel Orlando S. Macalalad Jr.

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

INDEPENDENT. The very word that would strike me as I think of her. She was a product of her time. A woman who's survival instincts were honed by the realities of war, oppression, discrimination, poverty and of the struggles of a people who want to have their own nation, their own identity.

She is not a national hero. She is just another woman. She is a classic example of yesterday's breed of Filipino women who made a home and nursed many children. She was just that. No. She was not "just that." She was my *lola* (grandmother). She was my friend.

My *lola* and I have a love story to share. It was not love at first sight. Oh, no it wasn't. It was an uphill climb that took years to reach.

I grew up with her. My 22 years of existence is graced by her presence in my upbringing.

How was she as a *lola*? She was strict. She was a woman of conservative ways, confusing behavior, irritable and hard to please. She was far from what the media portray of a doting grandmother, who would send encouraging words and uplifting advise, which was to me a frustration for many years. She was often critical and most of the time distant. Her hard-set jaws and piercing eyes would readily give you the shivers. Her chin that went up high reminded you of the Old Spanish arrogance.

As I was growing up, this picture of her stayed. There came a time in my youth when I was totally enraged toward her. Deep within me are hurts and pains piled up and ready to burst. Between us was a silent war that only Christmas reunion and other special occasions, would calm. I was rebellious toward her and by the time I was in high school I knew how to fight her. In my heart was a determination to leave our house and get rid of her presence.

Turning point

At some point in college I had discovered and experienced a truth that forever changed my life. God loves me. This was the truth. Oh no, this wasn't the kind of "God is love" message you get on greeting cards or on well-used clichés for people who want to say a good thing to another person. This was not that. This was different.

God loves me. It suddenly hit me and was explained to me that God's love is something that is constant, something that will not be removed from me. This was the kind of love that can forgive offenses like murder, incestuous rape, a lifetime of lying, womanizing, adultery, child sexual abuse or robbery. It was the same kind of love that can cover a multitude of subtle or scandalous mistakes, deep secrets or exposed maladies. This was a love that was expressed openly by God, worked for by Him and paid for by Jesus. It was that love that volunteered His Son to the cross so that everyone could have a home with Him. This was the kind of love that allows you another chance, a new beginning.

And so I had. A new beginning, that is. I prayed for forgiveness. I surrendered a heavy heart filled with hatred, frustration, guilt and my personal record of the sins done to me. I cried it all out to God and handed over to Him a very bruised and burdened heart. I prayed to love again.

Naturally, I thought of my relationship with *lola*. Because I was now receiving so much love from God, I couldn't afford to be unloving toward her again. I made a conscious commitment to love her no matter what. I resolved to learn and not to give up on anything that would disappoint me in the process of knowing her all over.

Yet the road was not smooth. Even the simplest things of reaching out took great effort. I made it a point to spend time with her. We started by exchanging small talk over meals. We talked while she was resting on her favorite chair about the war, her past, her love story, her children, her parents. We also shared our views in politics, about foreigners, domestic issues, and more so about celebrities, movies and television programs.

Soon we found ourselves laughing or eating midnight snacks together. Sometimes she would wait for me to eat. We had times "malling," too. She would treat me most of the time.

It was not easy breaking the silence between us. It was hard forgetting mistakes and forgiving every bit of offense that I remember. It was also hard for me to admit that I was wrong in some of my views of her. It was hard to say sorry.

I can remember one time when we had a misunderstanding. We were both silent and avoided being together in one place. Somehow in the midst of the cold war I missed our time together and yet I found it hard to relent. Soon I found myself hugging her and told her I was sorry. She was sorry also she said. That was the beginning of easier ways to express how we feel and the beginning of a friendship.

Lola, as I have discovered, is a sensitive and softhearted person. She believes in helping ease the pain of others. Many times she would come to my aid to loan me some of her money or hand me a few bills to cover my transportation expenses. She worried if I was not going home. She always asked if I had dinner already. She told me once that I was one person who understood her. There were times when she would confide in me her worries, her wishes or she would talk of things she missed.

This was all new to me. It was a friendship in a different dimension. This helped me believe that all my relationships should be anchored in friendship. I realized also that no matter how stubborn and hardhearted a person might appear to be, he or she would always respond to one thing in the world—love. We both did.

Sharing truth

Just this May 2000, she started feeling bad. She was experiencing breathing problems and numerous ailments all over. She had fever intermittently.

On one of her calmer moments we had time to talk and she told me how she saw changes in my life. I was surprised with her observations and I was richly blessed. I told her my story and the truth that I had discovered—the reason for the changes and the source of my motivation. I saw the excitement in her face when I explained things to her. She said she wanted to experience the same. She believed that she was one of those whom God had in mind when He sent His Son to die.

We prayed together. She embraced Jesus as her knight in shining armor and the only master of her life. She believed in God's total pardon and accepted His unconditional love for her. She surrendered her past, her present condition and her unknown future. There and then I was assured that one room in a mansion out there is being prepared for her.

Then she had her own new beginning.

As I see her now in her coffin and remember the hardships she went through these last days, I somehow feel that her appearance in both do not reflect the kind of woman she is and has become. She is not the cold cadaver before me. She was the life I knew in its vitality and complexities.

She was not "just another" woman. Her life is a blessing of meanings. From her came 12 human beings each capable of being a blessing to others. And from them came more than 20 other human beings that are as dynamic and different as there are a variety of flowers in the land.

In my lifetime, I have encountered a woman whose stories span 73 years of personal and national history.

In my memory is a picture of a person whose independence was surrendered when she had to give her life to Someone bigger, wiser and more loving than her or any other person.

In my experience is a "grand" mother whose greatest contribution in my life is herself and the gift of her precious friendship.

A temporary farewell and a big "thank you" to you then Lita, my dear friend, my *lola*.

Rhanchel Orlando S. Macalalad Jr., 22, works with an NGO training youth leaders in Quezon City public high schools.

LETTERS

The break coco farmers need

THIS is a reactions to the article entitled "Price fall killing Negros coco industry" (PDI, 02/12/01), which strikes me as rather odd that the article seems to confine the coconut industry problem to Negros Oriental, when there are other coconut-growing provinces like Quezon, Bicol, Samar, Leyte and Southern Leyte that are likewise affected by the price fall of copra. I am one of the coco producers in my province of Southern Leyte who have been adversely affected by volatility of copra prices. Also one of those who had been duped by the coco levy and suffered painful economic dislocation when copra prices dipped to rock-bottom level of P2 per kilo when monopolists manipulated the price of copra during the dark days of the Marcos era.

Now that the GMA administration has come to power, and hopefully, the Marcos and Estrada cronies are sidelined, it is the most opportune time to shake off the shackles of the monopolists for good and give the coco farmers the break they have long been waiting for. The break should be in the form of a coco price subsidy to protect the farmers from economic dislocation when prices of copra would fall below production break-even point. If the government has subsidized tobacco, sugar and power, why not coconut where 16 million people are dependent for their existence?

In contrast to the other subsidies of aforementioned, setting up coco price subsidy would not entail fiscal problem to the government, as it could easily be funded by the P50 billion coco levy fund which rightly belongs to the coconut farmers.

I therefore appeal to the lawmakers coming from the coconut regions to pass a bill to subsidize the price of copra at a certain level, say P10 per kilo. It is my educated guess that at such a level coconut farmers will have enough elbow room to become active participants in the government's bid for economic recovery.—**BASILIO CALAPRE, Maasin City, Southern Leyte**

NEA does not resell power equipment

I VIEW with serious concern Mr. Ramon Tulfo's report in his column (PDI, 02/24/01) about an alleged resale by NEA of transformers bought from China for P1.2 million for P16 million to electric cooperatives.

Kindly allow me to correct the evident misinformation fed to Mr. Tulfo's column. NEA's mandate does not allow it to buy and resell equipment. Any procurement of electrification equipment is conducted through international tenders overseen by the lending institutions. The equipment are then passed on to the electric cooperatives as commodity loans at the same cost. NEA is not allowed to charge co-ops a different price or to make a profit. I am unable to pinpoint such transactions implied in the report.

I understand the dubious reputation that the NEA has acquired. However, I wish to assure you that since 1998 the individuals involved have ceased to be connected with NEA or have been transferred. I want to assure you that under my leadership the ugly head of graft and corruption will no longer be allowed to surface.

Electric co-ops as private organizations do conduct their own procurement. While NEA tries to keep watch, such transactions are mostly beyond our control. We do have investigative and punitive powers over offending co-ops.

I will be honored if I could be given the chance to explain our current programs of bringing the benefits of electricity to many more remote areas of the country. I look at your newspaper as a "mirror" especially to government officials for public accountability and transparency. I certainly would like to know more about the reported transactions so that an appropriate investigation and corrective measure can be undertaken.—**MANUEL LUIS S. SANCHEZ, administrator, National Electrification Administration, National Electrification Administration, Quezon City**

Mad cows and mad politicians

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I'VE been away in Sorsogon with my students and was surprised to get back to find Metro Manila residents gripped in hysteria over mad cow disease and foot and mouth disease (FMD). I've been hearing all kinds of proposals to protect the public's health, from Sen. Blas Ople's challenge to agriculture and health officials to put their words where their mouth is by eating beef products in public, all the way up to proposals to ban blood donations from people who've eaten beef in Europe.

It seems mad cow disease has been used even for marketing wars, with rumors spreading that Jollibee's burgers were unsafe. Jollibee has since clarified, through letters to newspapers and large posters in their outlets, that their meat is from Australia and New Zealand and is therefore "100 percent safe."

I think this hysteria is an interesting example of how people tend to confound risks, exaggerating the smaller ones even as we disregard the more serious day-to-day threats. Let me wear my public health and veterinary hats today and set the record straight about these two diseases.

Mad cow disease is the lay person's term for a condition called subacute spongiform encephalopathy. It is actually a very rare disease which affects the brain, resulting in problems like muscle twitching, blurred vision and dementia or a decline of mental function. The disease has a long incubation period that could extend for several years but once the disease develops, most patients die within a few months.

In human beings, this condition is called Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease (CJD), which has been around for many years but still remains a mystery because scientists have not been able to discover a causative bacteria or virus. They have, however, been able to establish that the disease is transmitted through prions or infectious protein particles from tissues of infected individuals. CJD infections have been traced to tissue transplants (especially the cornea), contaminated instruments used during brain surgery and growth hormones (which are sometimes prepared from cadavers).

There are similar diseases in livestock—scrapie in sheep and mad cow disease in cattle. Transmission seems to occur across species—in fact, it's suspected that the rise in mad cow disease happened when cattle were fed with entrails of infected sheep. In the last few years, CJD infections have been traced to humans eating infected beef.

Has infected meat entered the Philippines? We will never be 100 percent sure because it's impossible to inspect all the meat products we have, from the raw to processed ones. Certainly we need to keep our guard up but I think our concerns may be misplaced.

Let's move on to FMD, which mainly affects cloven-footed animals, for example, cattle, sheep, pigs. The disease's name is derived from its symptoms, mainly vesicles around the mouth and feet. The disease is relatively mild and is not fatal except in very young animals. FMD's damage is due mainly to the sick animals being unable to work, or producing less meat or milk. Humans are very resistant to the disease so it is not considered a public health problem. The foot baths you find in our airports are there mainly because humans can carry the virus (e.g., cattle, sheep, pigs).

We've had sporadic FMD outbreaks in the Philippines for decades and our method of prevention is mainly through vaccination. In countries like Britain and in neighboring Taiwan, the prevention methods are rather drastic, involving a ban on the movement of all livestock, and the slaughter of all infected animals. Such measures are often more of responses to public perceptions—the disease spreads very quickly and adversely affects the country's image as a meat exporter, so slaughter is a dramatic way of restoring confidence.

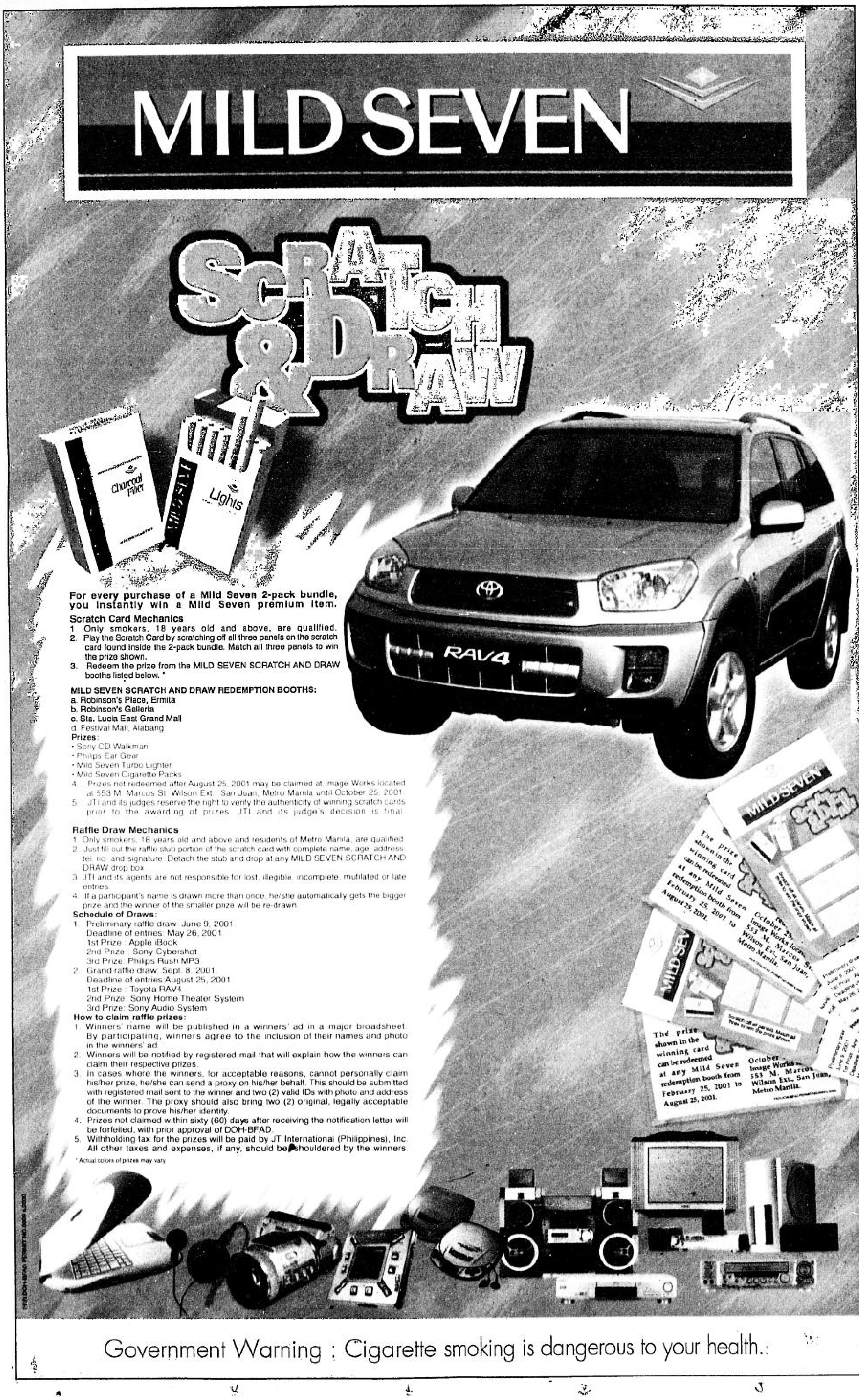
Let me digress with a little story about FMD and how even veterinary issues can turn political. During the Marcos dictatorship, the disease was renamed HMD or hoof and mouth disease because there were jokes going around about the country being afflicted by another kind of FMD, Ferdinand Marcos Disease.

Seriously though, we really are over-reacting to FMD, where there is practically no threat to human health, and mad cow disease, where there is an extremely low risk.

Want something to worry about? Then think of the very real risks of heart disease that come with beef and pork consumption. These days too, I'd worry more about mad politicians (especially one mad ex-president) than mad cows, and with election campaigns going into full swing, watch out for an outbreak of still another strain of FMD, that of candidates with their Foot in Mouth Displays.

Not Antonio Banderas

Last week in my column, "In praise of praise," I mentioned social learning theory in psychology and attributed this to Antonio Bandura. Two readers wrote in to point out the correct name is Albert Bandura. Yup, I did have a Freudian lapse there, Antonio Banderas somehow slithering into my subconscious. Blame it on overwork the last month—in between worrying about 30 field school students, I've had to prepare three conference papers and write several INQUIRER columns in advance. The paper chase continues now that the academic semester is coming to an end so if you do catch other bloopers, do write in. With or without bloopers, comments are always welcome at madcow@ pinoy kasi.org



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The WORLD

MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

C4 explosives used in Thai jet bombing

BANGKOK—A bomb thought to contain C-4 plastic explosive destroyed the Thai Airways jetliner that Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was due to fly on over the weekend, the defense minister yesterday said.

C-4 is a high-quality, military-grade plastic explosive. It is supplied in a slightly powdery form but can be manipulated into a rubbery material and pressed into any shape.

The blast ripped through the floor and ceiling of the Boeing 737-400 and left a big hole in the tarmac of Bangkok airport where the plane went up in flames near a boarding gate on Saturday, Defense Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh told a press conference.

Chavalit said the bombing was planned, but it was too early to say who might be involved or to conclude that the prime minister had been targeted.

"The report I received today says it was clear there was a plan to make things happen, but please don't jump to the conclusion that the plan was aimed at harming the prime minister. We have more factors to examine," he said.

He said the attack might be due to conflicts among organizations working at the airport or among political parties in Thailand.

The plane exploded 35 minutes before Thaksin and 148 other passengers were due to fly from Bangkok to the northern city of Chiang Mai. One cabin crew member was killed and seven other airline staff injured. No passengers had boarded the plane when the bomb went off. *AP*

2ND IN A ROW

Mori survives no-confidence vote

TOKYO—Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori survived his second no-confidence vote in Parliament yesterday, but a string of scandals and the stumbling economy were expected to force the hugely unpopular premier to resign soon.

The lower house of Parliament voted 274-192 to defeat the no-confidence motion submitted earlier in the day by four opposition parties. Mori, whose Liberal Democrats hold a majority in the chamber, defeated a similar measure in November.

The vote gave Mori's enfeebled government a respite, but it was expected to be brief. Speculation was rife that he could step down as soon as this week as the LDP readies for its annual party convention March 13 and searches for a successor.

The sharply worded debate on the motion in Parliament was further humiliation for a prime minister whose support ratings have fallen to under 10 percent.

"A person like you could be described with the phrase, 'He doesn't know what shame is,'" said Yukio Hatoyama, the leader of the largest opposition party, the Democrats.

The LDP-led three-party coalition, in turn, criticized the opposition for paralyzing the government with political jockeying and distracting officials from pressing national issues, such as the economy.

"This is an attempt to plunge politics into chaos, taking people's lives and the economy hostage," said Koji Omi, an LDP lawmaker, as opposition lawmakers heckled him.

The political quagmire comes at a tough time for Japan. Stock prices have fallen to a 15-year low, unemployment is at a record high, and officials are worried about a string of trends that show recovery from a decade-long slowdown may have stalled.

The LDP is worried that Mori's unpopularity could severely damage it in upper house elections coming up in July, and is eager to find a more popular replacement. The party is in the minority in the chamber and controls it only with the cooperation of coalition partners.

An especially poor showing by the LDP in July could strengthen an expected campaign by the opposition to push for snap elections in the more power lower house.

In a joint statement yesterday explaining the submission of the no-confidence motion, opposition parties blamed Mori for the country's troubles, criticized him for a series of scandals that have tarnished his one-year administration, and called his leadership "confused." *AP*

MORI

Cops raid political meeting of Fiji coalition

SUVA—Police yesterday broke up a meeting of the country's largest democratic coalition and briefly detained a top leader who is a candidate to head a government of national unity.

Eight police officers entered the hall where the People's Coalition was meeting and took into custody Tupeni Baba, a former government minister. As he was taken to the Suva Central Police Station, Baba told reporters he was not being arrested.

"No, no, no, its just a discussion, we want to make sure we can have another meeting," he said.

Police said Baba was questioned for several hours for holding political meetings without a permit before being released.

The police action comes as Fiji's political factions scramble after last week's Court of Appeal ruling that an interim government imposed by the military following a May 19 coup was illegal.

The Court ordered the 1997 multiracial Constitution restored, and said acting President Ratu Josefa Iloilo must recall parliament and vacate his office by March 15.

Iloilo and Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase agreed to comply with the ruling, but the government has yet to resign and Iloilo has not set a date for recalling parliament.

With the government not giving any firm dates for restoring democracy, former prime minister Mahendra Chaudhry's People's Coalition appeared to be disintegrating.

On Monday three of its five parties declared they support a government of national unity, despite Chaudhry's opposition.

There is a growing belief in the coalition that only an indigenous Fijian at the head of a government of national unity can command the support needed to unite the ethnically divided nation. Chaudhry was the country's first ethnic Indian prime minister before he was deposed by the coup by nationalist gunmen.

Ethnic Indians make up 44 percent of the population, while indigenous Fijians account for 51 percent. Relations crumbled as Indians gained more economic and political power, culminating with Chaudhry's election.

The Coalition meeting yesterday was called to assess the court ruling and was expected to discuss a possible leadership change, with Baba seen as the likely successor and a possible leader of a unity government.

Chaudhry did not attend the meeting, nor an earlier one yesterday of his own Labor Party in the same hall. The Labor Party meeting, attended by 16 of 36 Labor lawmakers, was one of the three Coalition parties that backed a government of national unity. Chaudhry instead met with the National Farmers Union, his power base within the trade union movement.

Chaudhry yesterday told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio that the interim government was stalling and must hand power back to the legal government. He has refused to be part of a government of national unity if it includes anyone connected with the coup. *AP*

TUNG

Tung says Falun Gong is a cult

HONG KONG—Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa said Sunday that the activities of the Falun Gong meditation sect—which he again described as a cult—will be watched "very carefully" in Hong Kong.

Tung told reporters upon his arrival in Beijing earlier in the day to attend a meeting of the National People's Congress that the authorities will not allow "anybody including Falun Gong to create any disorder or instability in Hong Kong or on the mainland of China."

Beijing has outlawed Falun Gong on the mainland as an "evil cult" but the sect remains legal in Hong Kong, where it has annoyed Beijing by staging frequent protests against the Chinese crackdown.

Describing the sect as a cult, Tung added "we need to watch their development very, very carefully."

A transcript of Tung's remarks was released in Hong Kong by the government.

Recently, pro-Beijing figures in the territory have urged a clampdown on the Falun Gong, saying the government should not allow Hong Kong to be used as a base for attacking China.

Pro-democracy campaigners and local religious groups in Hong Kong have expressed fear that any crackdown on the Falun Gong could undermine the high degree of autonomy the territory enjoys since reverting to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. *AP*

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No end in sight to Europe FMD cases

LONDON—Britain's foot-and-mouth crisis reached a new peak with confirmation of 17 new cases of the animal disease on Sunday, a record daily tally since the crisis erupted two weeks ago, bringing the total to 69.

Government officials confirmed new cases in Devon and Cornwall in the southwest of England, the north of the country near the border with Scotland and one in Scotland itself.

One of the Devon cases was in an animal owned by a tenant farmer on Prince Charles's vast Duchy of Cornwall royal estate, founded more than 650 years ago to provide an income for the heir to the throne.

A Duchy spokesperson said he was "very concerned" about the outbreak, and said the slaughter of potentially infected animals would begin later Sunday.

"We are very sorry for the tenant concerned, and our thoughts are with him and all other farmers at this difficult time," the spokesperson said.

Marion Winsor, who runs the farm on Dartmoor with her husband Roger, said: "We have done everything at ground level to stop it.

"If it is airborne there is nothing anybody can do. We have holed ourselves up here and have not even seen the postman for a week."

There are now 69 confirmed cases of foot-and-mouth disease in mainland Britain, the vast majority of them in England, and one in Northern Ireland.

Deputy chief veterinary officer Richard Cawthorne said further cases were being investigated. He refused to speculate on whether the outbreak had reached its peak.

"What we are looking at at the moment is a situation where the disease is not spreading by being transmitted directly or by wind-borne means. But it is still being distributed among sheep, as the sheep are incubating it."

About 53,000 animals have now been slaughtered as a result of the disease, including 6,300, which may have come into contact with infected animals.

Statistical comparisons with the previous major outbreak in 1967-68 show that the situation is likely to get much worse before it gets better.

Farmers should "assume the worst and hope for the best," National Farmers' Union (NFU) leader Ben Gill warned.

"I am not confident and will not be confident until we have got rid of it," he told BBC television.

Worryingly, at least two of the new cases in Devon were not thought to be linked to earlier confirmations of the disease in the county, suggesting a new source.

The Dartmoor case posed a "nightmare scenario," the NFU said.

Although the Winsors' animals were on enclosed land, common land, on which thousands of cattle and sheep roam freely, adjoins their farm. *AFP*

Dutch open trial of Dover human trafficking case

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands—The ill-fated voyage of 58 illegal Chinese immigrants who suffocated in an airtight truck container was at least the third operation of human trafficking by the same criminal group in three years, prosecutors yesterday said at the opening of a manslaughter trial.

The case against nine men—six Dutch and three Turks—was expected to highlight the growing traffic in humans. Hundreds of thousands of people are smuggled from developing countries every year to Europe, where they seek better lives.

In opening remarks, the prosecution said it would trace the gang's activities back to December 1997 when it smuggled another group of immigrants from the Netherlands to Belgium and across the English Channel to Britain.

The gang repeated the operation in April 2000, just three months before the Chinese immigrants died in the back of a refrigeration truck on a ferry bound for Dover, England. Altogether, at least 130 migrants were involved, said the prosecution.

All of the defendants have been charged with manslaughter or assisting manslaughter. Some face additional charges of human trafficking, forgery and membership of a criminal organization. They could face sentences of up to 30 years in prison if found guilty.

One of the defendants was a fugitive in Suriname, the former Dutch colony in South America. All nine had been living in the Netherlands, prosecutors said.

On trial separately in Dover, England, is 32-year-old Dutch truck driver Perry Wacker, accused of manslaughter in the 58 deaths.

The grisly case of the would-be immigrants who died crossing the English Channel in June shocked European authorities and triggered a new offensive against traffickers. The Netherlands admitted it was an important transit point in the international smuggling route, especially through the world's largest sea port in Rotterdam.

Estimates say up to half a million people are smuggled into Europe every year—each paying thousands of dollars to criminal syndicates. *AP*

FESTIVAL IN BASEL AP

Masqueraders in their costumes walk with lanterns, drums and flutes in the streets of Basel in northwestern Switzerland, March 5, during the start of the Swiss carnival. About 10,000 spectators from all over the world are taking part in the festival that will last three days and three nights.

RED ALERT

Overnight shootout kills Palestinian in Jerusalem

JERUSALEM—A Palestinian was killed yesterday in an overnight shootout with Israeli troops, and Israeli police set aside other duties to concentrate on preventing further attacks by Palestinian militants.

Amid an upsurge in violence, Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon stood poised to assume power this week with the pledge to restore security to Israel after more than five months of fighting with the Palestinians.

Sharon reached agreement with the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party on Sunday and now has enough support for a majority coalition government. He was expected to present his government to parliament this week, possibly on Wednesday, and would take office if the coalition wins approval.

Sharon's most urgent task will be dealing with the escalating violence.

A Palestinian bomber blew himself up and killed three Israelis on Sunday in the coastal town of Netanya. It was the second lethal bomb attack in four days inside Israel. Also, seven Palestinians died in violence Friday and Saturday.

Another Palestinian, Osama Naghnaghia, 21, was shot dead Sunday night when a group of gunmen battled an Israeli Army patrol near the West Bank town of Jenin, according to the Israeli military and an official with the Palestinian Tanzim militia.

Thousands attended Naghnaghia's funeral early Monday, the first day of Eid el-Adha, the Muslim Feast of the Sacrifice.

Sharon, meanwhile, said that Sunday's bomb attack was "a very serious one that shows that the Palestinian Authority is not taking the necessary steps" to halt violence.

"We know very well that the most loyal forces of (Palestinian leader Yasser) Arafat are involved in attacks," Sharon said. He did not directly link Arafat loyalists to Sunday's bombing.

Arafat said the Palestinian uprising would continue "until we raise the Palestinian flag on the wall of Jerusalem, the minarets of Jerusalem and the churches of Jerusalem." *AP*

China targets rural development to raise farmers' land rights

BEIJING—China will target rural farms and its impoverished west for development this year in an effort that will increase farmers' right to control land, Premier Zhu Rongji said yesterday in a speech to the national legislature.

The government also plans to step up its withdrawal from running the economy, allowing private ownership of all but key strategic industries, Zhu said as the National People's Congress opened its annual session.

Plans outlined by Zhu would reinvigorate reforms in the countryside, where most Chinese live but where income growth has lagged far behind the booming cities of China's east coast.

Economic plans approved by the ruling Communist Party call for annual growth of about 7 percent over the next five years, Zhu said. He said the government hopes to double its 2000 annual economic output of just over $1 trillion by 2010.

Beijing also plans to step up efforts to conserve water, combat corruption and prepare for entry into the World Trade Organization, Zhu said in his wide-ranging, 100-minute speech to lawmakers at the vast Great Hall of the People.

The premier's annual report at the opening of the Communist Party-controlled legislature presents the government's policy goals and serves as a guide for lawmakers who traditionally approve most proposals without making any changes.

In the countryside, farmers will be encouraged to work with companies and produce crops on contract, Zhu said. He said the government would try to spread biotechnology, better seeds and other advanced technologies.

"Areas where conditions permit should be encouraged to explore a land operation rights transfer system," Zhu said, though he stressed that the current practice of long-term land contracts would remain widespread.

China's countryside, where reforms began two decades ago with the creation of small farmers' markets, is threatened by market-opening required by Beijing's bid to join the free-trading World Trade Organization. *AP*

Fujimori moves into own home

TOKYO—Ousted Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori moved out of friends' home and into a central Tokyo apartment over the weekend, thanking his hosts for helping him adjust to life in Japan, he said in a statement.

Fujimori, who has been charged in Peru with abandonment of office and dereliction of duty, has stayed at the home of Japanese writer Ayako Sono since he resigned in November in the midst of a scandal. The Peruvian legislature later rejected the resignation and deposed him.

In a statement dated Sunday, Fujimori said he thanked Sono and her husband Shumon Miura, and that his stay at their Tokyo home allowed him to gradually adapt himself to Japanese life. He said he would stay in the new apartment temporarily.

Japan's Justice Ministry said last week that it would not extradite Fujimori to Peru to face charges if requested because he is a Japanese citizen.

Japanese law does not permit deportation of its nationals. Japan and Peru have no extradition treaty.

Fujimori is under investigation in Peru over his connection with his ex-spy chief, Vladimiro Montesinos, once the former president's closest adviser

Montesinos has been accused of money laundering, corruption and smuggling arms to Colombian guerrillas. He is now on the run.

Fujimori has denied any illicit dealings with Montesinos during his 10 years in power. *AP*

G8 ministers urge Taliban to stop ruin of statues

TRIESTE, Italy—Environment ministers from the world's seven most industrialized countries plus Russia on Sunday strongly condemned the attack by Taliban soldiers on ancient relics in Afghanistan and urged them to stop the assault.

"We express dismay and shock at reports of the edict of the Taliban leadership ordering the destruction of all statues and shrines in Afghanistan," said the final document issued by G-8 ministers at the end of a three-day summit in Trieste, northern Italy.

"We strongly urge the Taliban leadership not to implement this tragic decision."

Taliban soldiers have been pounding statues, including two towering Buddhas in the central city of Bamiyan, for three days. Witnesses said they were using antiaircraft weapons, tanks and explosives.

The Taliban have ignored pleas from an outraged world to stop the destruction of the ancient relics from the country's pre-Islamic past.

"Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage is of vital importance not only to the people of the Afghanistan, but also to the world as a whole," G-8 leaders said. *AP*

Macau cops use TNT to rescue noted lawyer

MACAU—Police with machine guns and bulletproof vests used dynamite to blast their way into an apartment early yesterday rescuing a prominent Portuguese lawyer who was kidnapped last week.

One suspected kidnapper jumped six stories to his death during the raid that freed attorney Jorge Neto Valente, 56; reportedly the richest Portuguese in this tiny gambling enclave that Portugal returned to China in December 1999.

Valente suffered a leg injury during his ordeal and immediately was taken to a hospital for treatment. Authorities maintained tight security and Valente was visited by Macau government officials and Portuguese Consul General Carlos Frota.

Two other suspected kidnappers were arrested in the predawn raid, when authorities acting on tips from informants went to the apartment and blew open the door with dynamite.

Valente had been kidnapped by people who stopped his car while he was returning home near the Macau waterfront late Wednesday.

Macau authorities have released little information about the case and it was not clear whether any ransom had been sought.

Valente is a native of Lisbon who came to Macau in 1970 and was a legislator for years. He also ran a newspaper, the Tribuna de Macau.

Macau, which is about 64 km west of Hong Kong, has an economy dominated by gambling and tourism. Like former British colony Hong Kong, Macau returned to Chinese sovereignty with a great deal of local autonomy under an arrangement dubbed "one country, two systems."

For several years leading up to the handover, Macau's Chinese triad gangs killed dozens of people in vicious turf fighting, but most of the violence stopped after China regained sovereignty. *AP*

Alleged rape of 15-year-old model shows dark side of Italy's fashion

MILAN—Blond, with that in-demand innocent schoolgirl look, a 15-year-old model from Slovenia came to Milan with hopes of gracing magazine covers. Instead, she says she found herself caught up in a circle of nightlife and drugs, was raped and wound up in a hospital.

The case, coming in the middle of fashion shows in Milan, is the latest scandal involving the dark side of Italy's fashion capital: a not-so-underground world of parties, cocaine, easy sex and—of course—models.

"This life corresponds to the idea of success these girls have," Silvia Ranzi, a booking agent at Flash Model Management, the agency that hired the girl, said during the weekend.

The scandal has evoked the case of Terry Broome, an American model who was convicted of murdering a Milan playboy in 1984. The Broome story was laced with accounts of abundant cocaine and alcohol, and insiders say things have only gotten wilder.

In 1998, a 19-year-old Israeli beauty queen was raped at knifepoint while in Italy to audition for modeling jobs. An Israeli travel agent was convicted in the case.

As Milan prosecutor Marco Ghezzi seeks the indictment of two Flash Model executives, many in the fashion industry blamed the girl's father, who brought her to Milan then headed back to Slovenia after a week.

Representatives of the agency called themselves "victims of fashion-world parasites" and said they could not be expected to replace the girl's parents.

"I wouldn't even leave a 15-year-old girl with nuns," said Beppe Modenese, a founder of Milan fashion week. "Her parents just shouldn't have left her alone." The girl was first spotted in Slovenia during a modeling casting.

"She was dressed like a schoolgirl: blue suit, white stockings, no heels," recounted Massimo Mandelli, one of the two executives accused in the case. "I thought she had what it takes."

A few months later, in October, she arrived in Milan and landed at Mandelli's agency. In business since 1984, Flash Model is well known in the fashion world and for representing such tennis stars as Anna Kournikova and Martina Hingis in Italian advertising campaigns.

The girl from Slovenia posed for photographers to build her "book," the portfolio young models need to attract designers.

After her father left, the girl was given a cellular phone and an apartment to share with a model from California. By the girl's account, according to the prosecutor, a few days later she was taking cocaine, hanging out with playboys and going to discos until the early hours.

A dangerous world

"It is a dangerous world out there," Ann Christiane Peine, a 19-year-old model from Germany, said after a fashion show. "You shouldn't start too young, not before 18 when you are much more responsible."

Prosecutor Ghezzi, in a telephone interview, said the Slovenian model told him she was raped by a man in the bathroom of one of Milan's fashionable nightclubs.

She told Ghezzi she had consented to "many" sex acts with other men on previous nights and to taking drugs.

"Fifteen-year-olds who are in Italy seeking work and don't speak the language need to be protected, even against their own will," Ghezzi said. "Someone must be held responsible."

The girl developed a vaginal infection and went to a hospital accompanied by Ranzi, the booking agent, where she told doctors her story.

Police and the prosecutor were then alerted.

Ghezzi has accused the two agency executives, Mandelli and Alberto Righini, with abandonment of minors, a charge usually applied in the case of children under age 14. But it can be extended to anyone else deemed unable to care for themselves, and Ghezzi argues that applies to the teenage model.

A judge must now decide whether or not to indict the executives.

Giorgio Armani, one of the biggest names in the industry, supported the prosecutor.

"I agree with those who say that the agencies should have the legal role of looking after models who are minors during the time parents entrust them to the agencies," he was quoted as saying in Italian newspapers. *AP*

THIS file photo shows American model Terry Broome during her trial in Milan in 1986 when she was convicted of second-degree murder for the 1984 shooting of a Milan playboy. Broome's case was cited in the rape of the teenage Slovenian model caught up in a circle of nightlife and drugs. AP

'My rivals are involved in bigger AFP scams'

(From page A1)

repair of its ships when it can go straight to the shipyards.

Espinosa likewise pointed to P1.4 billion worth of smuggled goods which had been confiscated but are believed to be missing.

This shot was apparently aimed at AFP Vice Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim, once the commander of the anti-smuggling unit, Presidential Task Force Aduana, and Espinosa's "logical successor" to the top AFP post.

Espinosa also asked for an investigation of irregularities at the AFP Logistics Command, whose officers, according to sources, are trying to ingratiate themselves with the Army commanding general Lt. Gen. Diomedio Villanueva.

Villanueva is said to be Reyes' favorite to take over his position.

Espinosa said his rivals want to take him out of the race "to further their illegal activities perpetuated during the administration of deposed President Estrada."

Without naming names, Espinosa said his detractors are hurling mud against him "to besmirch my honor, hoping that such would convince our President that I do not deserve to be considered for the post."

"To be the chief of staff is a lifetime dream of every soldier and I am not a hypocrite to deny that it is mine as well," Espinosa said.

Not anomalous

Espinosa asserted that there was nothing anomalous in the purchase of P3.8 million worth of Kevlar helmets made during his tenure as Marine commandant in 1998.

Wong had claimed that the Kevlar helmets were of inferior quality. Holding a sample of a Kevlar helmet which the corps previously rejected, Espinosa said that what the corps received eventually were Kevlars of superior quality.

On the missing 72 HK-MP5 rifles worth P7.2 million, Espinosa said the purchase was made in 2000 when he was no longer the corps commandant.

Prima facie evidence

The Office of the Ombudsman said that in the Kevlar helmet case, it found prima facie evidence to indict seven officers, including Espinosa, for graft and fraud. The Navy is still conducting its probe of the missing assault rifles.

Under pressure, Wong had relinquished his Navy command last March 1. He is now on floating status.

Espinosa also claimed that the real reason he was removed as commander of the Southern Command in February 2000 was that he opposed Estrada's plan to launch a total war against the Moro rebels.

Espinosa likewise said that Reyes failed to defend him to prevent his relief from Southcom.

Taking a dig at Reyes, Espinosa said: "If I know my subordinate is right, I will defend him until kingdom come."

Dare rivals

In the same press conference, Espinosa dared his rivals to resign along with him if only to prove that he has no other agenda except to serve government.

Curiously last week, Espinosa said that he would be retiring from the service. He had reportedly been offered the top post of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office in Taiwan.

The Meco post was waiting for Espinosa, according to Ms Macapagal.

Gov't seeks TRO to stop Danding

(From page A1)

meeting today.

In a 28-page petition, Marcelo said that "given the proximity of the stockholders' meeting," there "is no other speedy and adequate remedy currently available to the (government) except the issuance of a temporary restraining order."

Marcelo filed the petition after the Sandiganbayan issued a TRO stopping nominees of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) from exercising their right to vote the sequestered UCPB shares.

This prevented the government from taking majority control of the 15-member UCPB board.

In a decision issued on Feb. 28, the Sandiganbayan ruled in favor of the Coconut Farmers Federation of the Philippines, which questioned the PCGG's right to represent the country's one million coconut farmers, who own 95 percent of UCPB stocks.

The government has been seeking to take control of the shares in UCPB, which was funded largely by coconut farmers but eventually acquired by Cojuangco with the help of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Cojuangco is also chair of food and beverage conglomerate San Miguel Corp.

Marcelo charged that the Sandiganbayan had "improperly issued the order."

"If the sequestered UCPB shares were to be voted by the private respondents, the petitioner would suffer irreparable injury, having been deprived of the right which legally belongs to it since the subject UCPB shares were acquired through the use of coco levy funds," Marcelo told the high court.

As representatives of the coconut farmers, the PCGG had placed its own appointees on the UCPB board and effectively voted shares in the company through its representatives.

The Macapagal administration has appointed 14 people to the new UCPB board. They are Deogracias Vistan of Metrobank, Francsico del Rosario of the Development Bank of the Philippines, newspaper columnist Alex Magno, People Power Coalition spokesperson Conrado "Dodi" Limcaoco, Francisco Lejano, Ma. Jose Rufino, Helen Osias, Rolando Golez, Teresita Baltazar, Dungca Lim, Efren Villasen, Manuel Valdepuera Jr., Ramon Arceo Jr., Juan Carlos and Oscar Santos.

The PCGG has been the authorized representative of the coconut farmers since the bank was sequestered in 1986 and the government took over the voting rights of Cocofed.

GOV. Chavit Singson gets the ear of President Macapagal at the Palace. JOAN BONDOC

Kidnappings back, but PNP says not true

(From page A1)

were approaching levels last seen between 1992 and 1998 "when we were reporting one kidnapping every other day."

Even so, the PNP said there was "no cause for alarm," adding that all kidnapping cases reported to the police since Deputy Director General Leandro R. Mendoza took over as PNP chief on Jan. 22 "had all been solved."

"All security measures are in place to prevent, if not solve, the problem," Supt. Rodrigo de Garcia, PNP spokesperson, said in reaction to Ang-See's disclosures.

She said wealthy Chinese-Filipinos, considered prime targets by kidnap gangs, "are really scared about it."

According to her, families of kidnap victims were reluctant to report cases because "some policemen, active duty policemen are involved in these recent cases." She did not identify these officers.

De Garcia, however, said there were only 13 kidnapping cases reported from January to March this year compared to 11 cases during the same period last year.

According to him, seven of cases occurred during the Estrada administration while the rest have been solved, except the case involving a certain Raclito Taping who was seized by still unidentified gunmen in Davao del Sur.

De Garcia also cited the swift action taken by the police in solving the kidnapping rescuing two children in Albay, two Chinese-Filipino traders in Camarines Sur.

He said the figures did not indicate any "significant increase" in kidnapping cases.

Ang-See said CAAC representatives met on Friday with Chief Supt. Hermogenes Ebdane, head of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, to discuss the concerns of the ethnic Chinese.

"We talked about kidnap-for-ransom cases and we compared notes on how to address the problem," she said.

Mendoza

Ang-See reiterated her group's call for President Macapagal to withdraw the appointment of Mendoza who, according to the CAAC, was consorting with criminals.

Ms Macapagal ordered the Department of the Interior and Local Government to investigate the allegation last month, but she retained Mendoza as PNP chief when Interior Secretary Jose Lina reported that the charges were baseless.

PNP officials described Ang-See's claims as "political propaganda" aimed at boosting the chances of former PNP chief Panfilo Lacson in the May senatorial elections.

"Ang-See is trying her best to help his favorite cop Lacson to win this coming election at the expense of the PNP, specifically Deputy Director General Mendoza," a press statement circulating in Camp Crame said.

Ang-See's anti-crime group and prominent Chinese-Filipino businessmen are supporting Lacson's candidacy.

But even as Ang-See and the PNP were locked in a word war, the military reported a fresh kidnapping in Mindanao over the weekend.

Armed men snatched local banker Lowell Senda and her daughter Janice Glenn Senda, 21, near General Santos City on Saturday.

But Lt. Col. Danilo Servando, spokesperson of the Southern Command, said the banker was freed several hours later. *Reports from AFP and Dave Veridiano*

Erap is going to be a very lonely man, says Roco

By Blanche S. Rivera

OUSTED President Joseph Estrada is going to be a very lonely man.

Former senator and now Education Secretary Raul Roco yesterday said that the deposed President would not escape because he had nowhere to go.

"He has no choice but to face the music," Roco said. "I suspect he will not escape because he's being guarded, so it's really shameful."

Roco said that even if Mr. Estrada could go to the United States, particularly Hawaii where the Marcoses lived in exile after the 1986 Edsa revolt, he would be hounded by the media.

If he chooses to seek refuge in an "underdeveloped country," he would be "unhappy" as the cronies of the former dictator Ferdinand Marcos were during their exile.

"Even if he takes away his mistresses, even in Hawaii, which is a very good place to go to in the US, he would be unhappy," Roco said in his weekly press conference at the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

"How many hamburgers can you eat? How many parties can you attend to keep you happy? You cannot even go to Mass and meet the community because the community is angry with you. So it's better for him to stay," said the former senator who was one of the 10 senator-judges who voted to open the envelope that contained damning evidence against Estrada.

Intelligence reports had revealed that Mr. Estrada was planning to go to Indonesia from Mindanao where he joined the provincial sorties of the candidates of the Puwersa ng Masa.

Military authorities said Mr. Estrada was also eyeing Hong Kong and Palau as possible destinations for him and his family, but his plan was foiled when an advance party allegedly spotted heavy military presence at the airport.

"It is not in his interest and not in the interest of the country that he leaves, because he's facing plunder (cases)," Roco said.

Adaza blows whistle on illegal campaign posters

FINALLY, someone has formally complained about the wanton posting of campaign materials in public places, and he is a candidate himself.

Senatorial bet Homobono Adaza yesterday asked the Commission on Elections to disqualify 15 of his rivals for the upper chamber after their campaign materials began sprouting outside designated poster areas.

Adaza, the lone senatorial candidate of the Nacionalista Party, filed a complaint with the Comelec, saying the violations "were of common public knowledge and the Comelec should officially take notice of these violations."

Named respondents in the complaint were Franklin Drilon, Wigberto Tañada, Ralph Recto. Ernesto Herrera, Liwayway Vinzons-Chato, Manuel Villar, Francisco Pangilinan and Roberto Pagdanganan, all of the administration People Power Coalition, and Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Panfilo Lacson, Dr. Luisa Ejercito, Ricardo Puno, Orlando Mercado, Juan Ponce Enrile and Noli de Castro of the opposition.

If found guilty, the candidates and their supporters who put up the posters could face up to six years in prison and disqualification from holding public office and enjoying the right of suffrage.

"What kind of senators will they make and what kind of laws will they enact when they are the first ones to violate the law?" Adaza asked in his two-page complaint addressed to Comelec Chair Alfredo Benipayo.

Section 85 of the Omnibus Election Code prohibits the posting or display of election propaganda "in any place, whether public or private, except in common poster areas."

Adaza also said the posters of the 15 candidates do not carry the names and addresses of their printers and payors, as required under Section 84 of the election code.

"If they cannot enforce the election code, what is the use of holding elections where we will be electing candidates who wantonly violate the law?" Adaza asked.

Gerald G. Lacuarta

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Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

ROUNDUP

Fire destroys 46 homes

DUMAGUETE CITY—Forty-six families lost their homes Feb. 27 to a fire that swept through a cramped neighborhood in Purok Baltimor, Colon Extension here. The timely arrival of firemen prevented the fire from spreading to the other houses, which were mostly built of light materials. FO3 Richard Calunod said the fire started at the house of Moses Timosa, where two children had been playing with fire. The damage was placed at P2 million.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

Missing shabu probed

CEBU CITY—City assistant prosecutor Rosendo Brillantes was relieved of his court duties pending the investigation of the disappearance of about 300 grams of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu that was in his custody. Regional State Prosecutor Hernando Masangkay said Brillantes was confined to office duties starting Feb. 22 while waiting for the outcome of separate investigations conducted by a special panel of prosecutors and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Rural doctor charged

MAAYON, Capiz—Graft charges were filed against the daughter of Maayon Mayor Miguel Deller who was the rural health doctor here until she resigned Nov. 15 last year amid allegations that she was not a licensed physician. Melma Dellera-Alovera, wife of Maayon Councilor Edgar Alovera, was accused of perjury, forgery and falsification of public documents before the Office of the Ombudsman in the Visayas.

Gerry Pagharion, PDI Visayas Bureau

Abu Sayyaf willing to talk

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The Abu Sayyaf had expressed willingness to negotiate without any conditions with the Macapagal administration for the release of two remaining hostages. Basilan-based Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Ahmad Salayuddin, in an interview with a radio station here, said it should be made clear that the negotiations will not be interpreted as surrender. Still with the Abu Sayyaf are American Jeffrey Schilling and Filipino Roland Ullah, the remaining hostages taken last year from a dive resort in Sipadan, Malaysia.

Julie Alipala-Inot, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Catanduanes forest lines set

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources regional office delineated last year 329 kilometers of permanent forest lines in Catanduanes. DENR regional executive director Oscar Hamada said the department seeks to delineate at least 381 kilometers of forests in the region.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Awards for rescuers

LEGAZPI CITY—The Legazpi-Albay Filipino-Chinese Community honored eight police officers for the successful rescue of two children from a three-day hostage crisis in Sto. Domingo town last month. Among those awarded were Chief Supt. Marcelo Navarro Jr., Bicol police director and Supt. Reynaldo Rafal, Albay police director.

Roly Embile, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

4 killed in violent incidents

SAN PABLO CITY—Four persons were killed while two were wounded in separate cases of violence in a span of two weeks here. These added to the 111 murder cases in the province. Another 125 men are accused of rape or frustrated rape in different courts. All of them are now at the Laguna provincial jail, according to jail guard Glenn Madiz.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Luzon and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila Hi 32° Lo 23°	Baguio Hi 25° Lo 15°	Tuguegarao Hi 30° Lo 21°	Laoag Hi 30° Lo 19°
Clark Zone Hi 32° Lo 22°	Tagaytay Hi 31° Lo 21°	Legazpi Hi 29° Lo 24°	Calapan Hi 31° Lo 23°
Bacolod Hi 31° Lo 22°	Roxas Hi 29° Lo 25°	Cebu Hi 32° Lo 25°	Tacloban Hi 27° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos Hi 30° Lo 23°	Zamboanga Hi 33° Lo 25°	Cagayan de Oro Hi 31° Lo 23°	Davao Hi 30° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research

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Gloria Senate bets dragged into Cebu mayoral conflict

By Malou Guanzon-Apalisok
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The battle for political supremacy in Cebu City between two groups allied with the Macapagal administration could imperil the 13-0 win of the People Power Coalition senatorial candidates.

Former Mayor Tomas Osmeña, who is running to regain his seat at the city hall, said officials of the Macapagal administration who are backing reelectionist Mayor Alvin Garcia had added pressure to the local race and could affect the administration campaign in the national level.

While he was committed to campaign for a 13-0 victory in favor of the PPC candidates in Cebu, he said he has a local fight in his hands.

"There are elements within the group of President Macapagal who are trying to have a backdoor operation and attract the *balimbings* (turncoats)," he said.

He identified "these elements" as former Tarlac Rep. Jose Cojuangco and former Rizal Rep. Emigdio Tanjuatco, chair and secretary general of the Kabalikat Ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), an original party of Ms Macapagal.

But Osmeña clarified that Ms Macapagal was not involved in Kampi initiatives saying it was Cojuangco who was "trying to attract all the *balimbings*."

The President, he said, does not have the time to meddle in local politics.

Kampi is backing the reelection bid of Mayor Garcia and the gubernatorial bid of Vice Gov. Fernando Celeste.

Mayor Garcia was formerly identified with ousted President Joseph Estrada's Lapian Ng Masang Pilipino. He was accused of mobilizing paid crowds for Estrada during a rally held in Cebu at the height of the *jueteng* scandal in November, an accusation which Garcia strongly denied.

Celeste is a protege of Sen. John Osmeña, one of Estrada's staunchest ally.

Tomas Osmeña is running under Bando-Osmeña Pundok Kauswagan, a PPC ally. He is also a member of the executive committee of Promdi that belongs to the PPC.

Garcia is running under the local party Kugi Uswag Sugbu (Kusug) that was scheduled to enter into a formal coalition with Kampi yesterday.

But it did not push through after Cojuangco and Tanjuatco failed to come because of the death of the wife of Pastor Saycon, Council of Philippine Affairs (Copa) leader.

Cojuangco and Tanjuatco are leaders of Copa that supported Ms Macapagal at the height of the People Power II.

Former Speaker Manuel Villar, PPC senatorial candidate, admitted that the emergence of more than one major party supporting the PPC ticket has become "a problem."

"Local politics is so complicated. There are so many candidates. But we just follow instructions," he said.

Villar said Ms Macapagal has adopted a hands-off policy because she is concentrating on the national candidates.

Asked if he and other PPC candidates would join Garcia's rally, he replied: "Everything is possible. We just follow instructions. We are already being accused of being to each his own. But I call it flexibility."

Villar was in Cebu with the rest of the PPC candidates for a rally held at a parking lot along General Maxilom Avenue this city last Sunday.

About 3,000 people attended PPC's first rally here that was hosted by BOPK and Promdi.

Garcia meanwhile told the Inquirer that it was the Kampi hierarchy that invited the PPC bets in Cebu.

He added that he expected them to join him because they would be afraid that the mayor would not carry them in his ticket.

Garcia's supporters claimed that President Macapagal was backing him, a claim pooh-poohed by Osmeña.

Asked if President Macapagal would be a factor in the local elections, Osmeña replied, "Only because Alvin is making it a factor. It's the Cebuanos who will select us."

Bank manager, daughter seized

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A bank executive and his 20-year-old daughter were kidnapped by armed men here late Saturday.

Four suspects with short firearms barged into the house of Leonel Sinda, branch manager of Consumers Bank here, in Gensânville Subdivision in Barangay Bula at about 8:20 p.m. Saturday

The suspects tied Leonel's wife Glenda while he and his daughter Janice, a senior student at the Philippine Women's College in Davao City, were ordered to stay put.

The suspects searched the house for valuables then took Leonel and Janice at gunpoint. They left with the victims using Leonel's Honda Civic as a getaway car.

Glenda, however, managed to untie herself and reported the kidnapping to the police.

Police recovered the getaway car, including Leonel, at past 9 p.m., in a grassy lot near the Bulaong Terminal here.

Janice is still being held captive by the gunmen who split into two groups.

In Legazpi City, kidnappers freed also on Saturday Maryanne Tan, 20, daughter of a wealthy businessman in Naga City, after her family reportedly paid a P2-million ransom, police said.

Chief Supt. Marcelo Navarro Jr., Bicol police regional director, said Tan was released at about 5 a.m. somewhere in Polangui, Albay where she was held captive for the past five days.

Navarro said Tan, who was seized Feb. 27, was unharmed and unmolested but remained blindfolded during her captivity.

Lawmen are tracking down two L-300 vans used by the abductors during Tan's captivity.

One is colored maroon with license plate CGC-339 while the other is colored white with license plate NYW-373.

Tan was the third kidnapping victim in Naga City and the fifth in the Bicol region since February. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau, Roly Embile and Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

TOOTS SOBERANO

OUT OF THE COLD

Three of the people who made the ouster of President Joseph Estrada possible have resumed normal lives—Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson and "juetengate" witnesses Emma Lim and Menchu Ichon. They recently inspected tomato harvests in Vigan that are to be processed into tomato paste and other products.

Ironies haunt tragic La Union accident

SAN FERNANDO CITY—A 24-year-old college graduate who passed the board examination for physical therapists only last month is now fighting for her life at the Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center here following Saturday's vehicular accident in Burgos, La Union that killed seven of her relatives.

Cely Langcao, a graduate of Pines City Educational Center in Baguio City, was pierced in the abdomen by a blunt object and suffered the worst injury among the ill-fated jeepney's 26 survivors (not 28 as police earlier reported), according to hospital records.

Ironically, the driver of the jeep was her own father, Ricarte Langcao, whose cuts and bruises were less agonizing than the pain he felt when he saw his daughter in the hospital bed.

"Cely was the only child I brought on the trip. Had I taken the young ones, we surely would have had a death in the family," he told the Inquirer.

Ricarte, 50, used to ply his "double type" jeepney daily through the treacherous two-hour route from Tabuk, Kalinga, to Tuguegarao City in Cagayan.

Negotiating the curves of Naguilian Road from Baguio City to La Union was no hard task for him until the jeep's brakes failed, causing their vehicle to plunge into a ravine, he recounted.

With their means of livelihood lying in a heap on the slopes of Burgos town, the Langcaos have no choice but to return to Tabuk with broken dreams and empty pockets, according to Ricarte's wife Marciana, who traveled to this city from Tabuk as soon as she learned about the accident.

But they would also be haunted by memories of their "abalayan" Florito Javier whose idea it was to bring the extended family on a rare four-day tour as a "blowout." Javier had just retired from service at the Commission on Audit office in Tuguegarao in February this year.

He was killed on the spot with his retirement check still in his pocket, Marciana said. *Gia Damaso-Dumo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

9 wounded in Cotabato grenade attack

COTABATO CITY—At least nine persons were wounded, including a 10-year-old girl, when an unidentified man lobbed a fragmentation grenade at a *sari-sari* store in Kabacan, North Cotabato on Sunday night.

Kabacan Mayor Wilfredo Bataga condemned the grenade attack which he described as an act aimed at hurting innocent civilians.

"They were market goers, mostly women. Why include them in uncivilized acts when one has an ax to grind against another," Bataga said.

Police said the victims were in front of the roadside *sari-sari* store when the grenade was lobbed. The victims first thought stones were being thrown at them.

Wounded were 10-year-old Francia de la Peña, Lapricio Mangasar, 55; his wife Christina, 50; Cris Ibarra, 21; Jocelyn Cunanan, 40; Carlito Ledesma, 56; Elpie Eleazar, 21; Dolor Dulay, 34; and storeowner Angelito del Rosario.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Houseboy in Bacolod slayings draws 200 years

By Carla Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Bemon Gallo was sentenced to 200 years in prison for the massacre of three adult members of the Rivilla family and their two housemaids in December.

Regional Trial Court Judge Roberto Chiongson yesterday sentenced Gallo to five counts of *reclusion perpetua* for the deaths of Carlos Rivilla Jr., 76; his wife Florinda, 76; son Benrico, 42; and helpers Dolores Ogatis, 20; and Ritchel Gonzales, 19, on Dec. 17.

One count of *reclusion perpetua* is equivalent to 40 years imprisonment.

Gallo was expressionless when his sentence was read to him inside Chiongson's courtroom. He told reporters later that he was asking the Rivilla family to forgive him.

In his decision, Chiongson said Gallo was meted out a prison term of 200 years instead of the death penalty as a result of a plea bargaining agreement.

Gallo had changed his plea from innocent to guilty during a pre-trial conference last month after the victims' relatives agreed to have his sentence lowered from death to life in exchange for his admission of guilt.

But the Rivilla family said Gallo still faces lethal injection for the killings of Benrico's sons—Mark Anthony, 13; Guillermo Benrico Jr., 11 and John Michael, 9.

Gallo tried to plea bargain in these cases but Judge Anastacio Rufon said plea bargaining was barred in cases involving minors.

Carlos Benedict Revilla, grandson of the slain Rivillas, said they allowed Gallo to plea bargain for a lower penalty in the cases involving the adults because they planned to use his admission of guilt in the cases involving the three boys.

Anti-Red cultist killed in clash with police

By Nestor Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A member of an armed cult was killed when his group clashed with police Friday morning.

Elvert Navarro, 34, died of multiple bullet wounds, including in the head, when he and five other armed men clashed with members of the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Iloilo police in Sitio Lanot, Barangay Del Castillo, Sara town, 102 km north of here.

The 24-member police force led by Senior Insp. Ronald Palomo was to arrest a companion of Navarro, Elpidio Soberano, when he was fired upon by the armed group.

Soberano is wanted in Western Visayas for murder and highway robbery and carries a P100,000 reward for his capture.

Navarro faces charges of illegal possession of firearms in Dumarao, Capiz.

After the 15 minute-clash, Soberano and the other members of the group fled to a mountainous area bordering Iloilo and Capiz, leaving Navarro's remains behind.

Iloilo policemen ran after Soberano's group. Police recovered an M-16 rifle with an extended magazine, 14 bullets and five bullet casings.

While police identified the group as a gang behind a string of robberies and swindling in the area, they also recovered ID cards of the previously unknown Asian Anti-Communist League of the Philippines.

The armed men also left behind amulets, bandanas with strange designs, and sleeveless shirts, all colored red. Also recovered were a handbook with Latin verses, bottles of herbal oil and a list of money and firearms taken by the group from households in the area.

Police had been monitoring Soberano's group based on intelligence reports that they pass through remote barangays in the area.

The Northern Iloilo-Capiz border is among the traditional hotbeds of communist rebels.

This was the first time, however, that the presence of an anti-communist armed group was reported in the area in recent years.

Religious cults were used by the military to fight rebels in remote villages in Negros and Panay islands at the height of the communist rebellion in the 1980s to the early 1990s.

Supt. Victor Buco, Iloilo police chief, said they were confirming reports that the armed group could be used by politicians in the coming elections. He, however, failed to identify the politicians involved.

2 more escape plans fail

(From page A1)

On Estrada's unpredictable schedules while he was in Mindanao last week, the military official said: "His itinerary is constantly being changed. Sometimes he is scheduled to be there but he is out there somewhere."

Estrada, who has vociferously denied having any intention of fleeing, returned to Manila on Sunday night after a three-day campaign sortie in Mindanao.

His first alleged escape try was supposedly aborted due to the presence of military intelligence agents at the Davao airport.

The officer said Estrada's "back-up plans" were to fly from the Cagayan de Oro City airport to Hong Kong or from Puerto Princesa City to the Asia-Pacific island chain of Palau. He did not provide details.

The Macapagal administration has formally appealed to five countries not to grant political asylum to Estrada, who faces prosecution for plunder and other charges after being stripped of presidential immunity by the Supreme Court.

Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona said his office had already alerted the governments of Indonesia, Hong Kong, Guam, Papua New Guinea and Palau to block Estrada from entering their borders.

'Strong' signs

The military official said the aircraft that repeatedly landed and took off in Davao belonged "to a friend of the former President," and that there were "strong indications that they were up to something."

Asked if he was referring to Cojuangco, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said "yes."

"We don't know whose idea this was, but as I have said, there are indications that they are up to something," he said of the alleged escape attempts.

Cojuangco, the officer said, owns at least two planes—a Lear and a Citation. The INQUIRER could not confirm the information last night, although the businessman is known to own at least one seven-seater Lear jet.

A Davao aviation security officer noted the presence of an airstrip on Cojuangco's plantation in Malita town, Davao del Sur.

The Estrada ally used the same airstrip when he returned to the country from self-exile in Australia a few years ago, said Chief Insp. Bertrand Gido of the PNP's 8th Regional Aviation Security Office.

Gido said the airstrip could accommodate small aircraft, like a Lear Jet.

Warning

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said that owners of the planes that Estrada has been using—Subic Air's Pepito Alvarez and Cojuangco—have already been warned not to aid the former President in any departure attempt.

"If they do, we shall run after them," Perez warned.

"We are not only going to impound their planes, we are going to cancel their franchise to operate a private charter," he said in a radio interview.

The justice department will also not hesitate in slapping anyone who aids Estrada in leaving with charges of obstruction of justice, according to Perez.

Cojuangco, one of Estrada's top campaign contributors, was almost immediately reinstated as San Miguel chair in June 1998 following the election of Estrada as president.

He also chairs the Nationalist People's Coalition, one of the three political parties comprising the former ruling Lapian ng Masang Pilipino coalition.

Estrada was the businessman's running mate in the 1992 elections when Cojuangco, a known crony of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, made his failed bid for the presidency.

After Ms Macapagal was sworn into office, Cojuangco sought to distance himself from Estrada in what observers said was an attempt to preserve his control over San Miguel. The government wields control over sequestered shares in the conglomerate.

Close watch on Erap

Hounded by questions about Estrada's alleged plans to leave the country and avoid prosecution, Cabinet and security officials yesterday insisted that both the former President and the country's borders were under close watch.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita told Palace reporters that the Air Force, the Navy and the Army had all been put on alert to monitor Estrada's movements and prevent his departure.

ABS-CBN News reported that it had learned that two Air Force fighter jets were assigned to trail the Lear jet carrying Estrada from place to place.

Airport, seaport, immigration and customs authorities are also on double alert.

A seemingly nonchalant Ermita downplayed the military deployment as "normal procedure," but also said that the government considered the possibility of an escape attempt substantial enough to warrant "extra precautions."

"We don't know what's in the mind of the former President. We don't know what his advisers tell him," the defense chief said.

"Let's just say we're not taking any chances," he added.

But Ermita said other members of the former first family were not being monitored because "they are not included in the charges and only the former President is under investigation" by the Department of Justice and the Office of the Ombudsman.

But the Supreme Court's decision on Friday upholding the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and stripping Estrada of immunity left the former President, his wife Luisa and son Jinggoy facing several charges, including the nonbailable offense of plunder, which is punishable by death.

Ramos: He can do it

In another interview at the Palace, former President Fidel Ramos warned that the disgraced leader had the resources, the equipment and the friends to make an escape.

Ramos said Estrada "certainly has the capability to do that with his huge bank account and the transportation and communication capabilities that he has due to the friendship and support and sympathy perhaps of some of his former cronies."

Ninoy Aquino International Airport general manager Edgardo Manda warned airport personnel of severe sanctions if they are caught aiding Estrada or any of his cronies in sneaking out of the country.

"They will be dealt with severely. They'll either be suspended, dismissed or charged in court for aiding Estrada or any of his allies," he said in a phone interview.

Justice Secretary Perez said "we have already issued the hold-departure order but what we are guarding against is the possibility of escaping through the back door."

He said agents of the National Bureau of Investigation had been monitoring Estrada's movements as he campaigns for Puwersa ng Masa candidates.

But Guingona, who was in Cebu on Sunday to attend a rally of the People Power Coalition senatorial candidates, said he was confident that Estrada would not try to flee since "he has said before that he was born here and that he will also die here."

Perez, for his part, said that if Estrada "is going to escape, he won't bring along any of those running in the elections." The former first lady is running for the Senate.

Stir

At the height of a double alert imposed by authorities at the country's airports and seaports, the departure of a Philippine Airlines jet from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport caused a stir yesterday morning.

The PAL Boeing 737-300 jet took off after 11 a.m. for New Zealand via Davao, setting off a wave of speculation that the plane could be carrying the embattled Estrada family.

But an official of the Air Transportation Office, however, quickly doused the rumor, saying that the aircraft was only carrying two crew members, the pilot and his co-pilot, and was flying to New Zealand to undergo a much-needed maintenance check.

Davao air traffic control authorities confirmed that the plane was en route to Port Moresby.

Ric Casipit, assistant chief of the ATO safety division, added that any plane leaving Philippine airspace without ATO clearance and guidance would risk colliding with other aircraft. "That's very dangerous. It's like a suicide," Casipit said in a phone interview.

Gido, the Davao aviation security officer, said the Davao airport had been put under 24-hour watch by police and military intelligence agents.

He also said that authorities had beefed up security in various airstrips in Southern Mindanao, Caraga and Northern Mindanao in anticipation that Estrada would use provincial airstrips since these are traditionally less secure.

There are functional and existing government-owned airstrips in Mati, Davao Oriental; Malaybalay City in Bukidnon; Camiguin province and Tandag in Surigao del Sur. ***With reports from Jowel F. Canuday and Carolyn O. Arguillas, PDI Mindanao Bureau; TJ Burgonio, Rocky Nazareno and Andrea Trinidad***

Laarni plans to leave RP; but Loi pledges to remain

(From page A1)

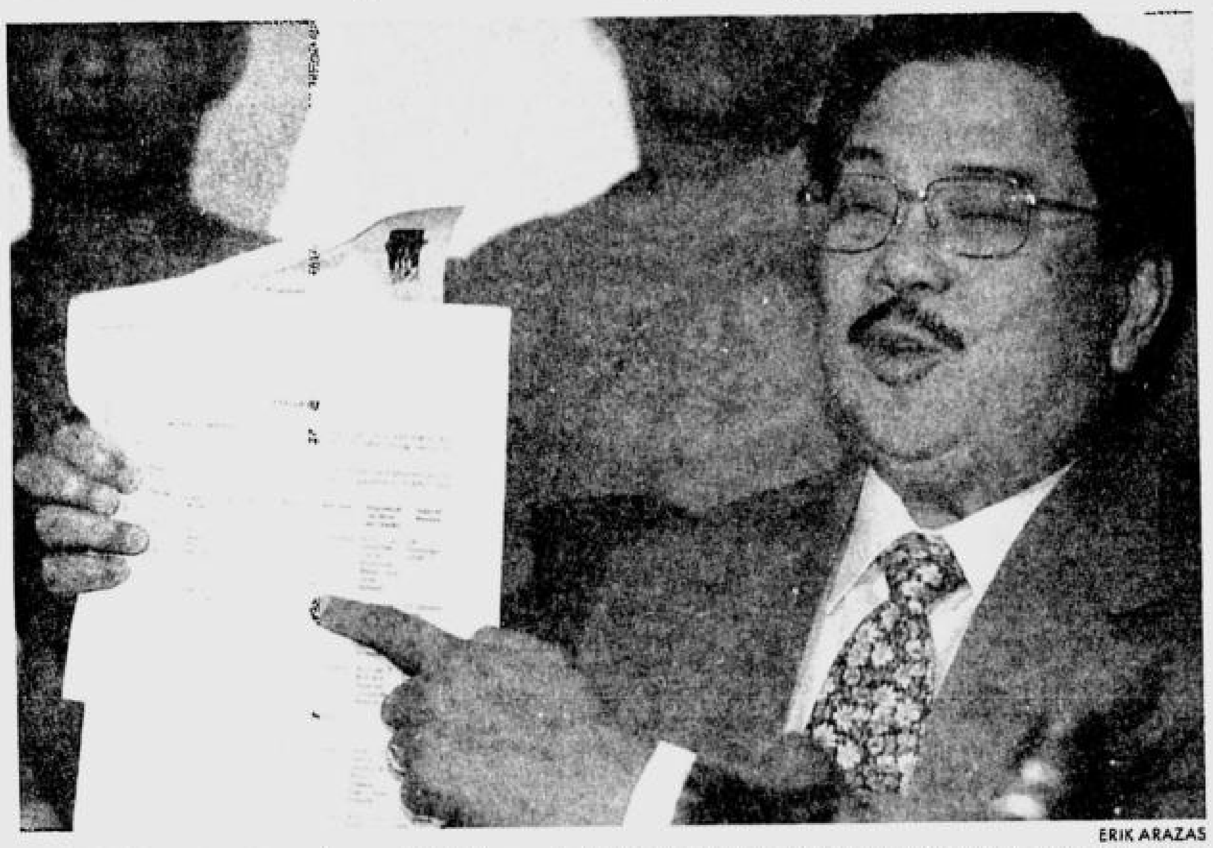
Polk Street residence in San Juan, Estrada said reports of his planned escape to Indonesia to escape prosecution were all "fabrications" and "part of the continuing black propaganda" against him.

"I will instruct my secretary to fax my campaign schedule to the Isafp (Intelligence Service of the AFP), the airport, and even Malacañang so that they won't be suspicious of where I will really go," he said.

He also said he would "definitely" continue campaigning for the Puwersa ng Masa candidates in provincial sorties.

Estrada is scheduled to fly to Samar this morning, but as of last night he was still not sure of going.

Asked about the high court's decision affirming the legitimacy of the Macapagal administration, he said in Filipino: "It seems that I can no longer get justice there and that the Filipino people will have the final say. That's why the more I need to go out (to campaign)."



ERIK ARAZAS

JUSTICE Secretary Perez shows Mark Jimenez's affidavit on Estrada's alleged plunder of SSS and GSIS.

Double alert

Aviation, security, immigration and customs officers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport were put on an indefinite double alert starting last weekend to stop not only Estrada but also his cronies on the hold-departure list.

But according to Domingo, the Bureau of Immigration cannot stop Enriquez from going abroad because she has not been charged in court and, therefore, has not been subject of a hold order.

"We can only monitor her departure, period," Domingo told reporters, adding that immigration officers had to make sure that Enriquez would clear with the BI counter before boarding her plane.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said commercial airlines and owners of private aircraft would be prosecuted and fined heavily if they helped Estrada leave the country.

"We are monitoring his activities and I will not allow him to fly to another country," Perez said over radio station dzRH.

Perez said it would be "difficult" for Estrada to flee because immigration posts were on alert to prevent it and the National Bureau of Investigation and aviation authorities were monitoring private aircraft.

He said operators of private aircraft had been warned that if Estrada fled the country with their help, "we will impound their aircraft and we will cancel their franchise."

Perez also said those who would help Estrada leave would be guilty of "abetting the escape" of a person under investigation, a criminal offense.

In and out

Enriquez, said to be Estrada's favorite among his string of mistresses, stirred a controversy on her return to Manila on Feb. 18.

She was caught on video being escorted out of the arrival area by aides of Senators Teresa Aquino-Oreta and Vicente Sotto III without clearing with the immigration counter.

Domingo theorized that the reason for Enriquez's secret return to Manila last month was to ensure that she could leave anytime she wanted without being noticed.

"She wanted to create the impression that she had been abroad all the time and that if she would decide to leave again, nobody would know," Domingo said.

Enriquez hurriedly flew to Hong Kong in January to avoid testifying on Estrada's secret bank accounts at his impeachment trial.

At that time, she had a standing summons to appear before the Senate impeachment court.

She later said she was going to the United States to undergo medical treatment.

'Ridiculous'

Ejercito, who is seeking a Senate seat under the Puwersa ng Masa, took issue with reports on her husband's supposed attempt to fly to Indonesia from the Davao International Airport.

"The charge is ridiculous," she said. "First, you have to doubt the credibility since the story traces its information to an 'unidentified' officer. A source that refuses to identify itself is suspect."

The former first lady also said that "if the escape story comes from the military intelligence community, the more the credibility suffers, knowing the competence of our intelligence agencies."

She said the Macapagal administration should make clear what it wanted to do with her husband. "First, they told him to leave the country. Then they said they will deport him. Now they want him to stay," Ejercito said.

"Well, President Estrada is staying. He has said that since he was born here, he will stay here and die here. The same thing goes for this lady," she added.

Juanito Remulla, a legal adviser of Estrada, expressed indignation that the immigration bureau had posted notices in airports nationwide reminding employees to block the deposed President from leaving.

"This kind of treatment is shabby and uncalled for by any standard," the Agence France Presse quoted Remulla as saying. "(It) is also an unacceptable way of treating a president, especially one who has only been accused of crimes, none of which have been proven."

Remulla also pointed out that photos of Estrada "depicting him like a wanted criminal" accompanied the immigration notices.

"Publishing insulting photos like this is yet another component in the disinformation campaign waged by groups who wish to bring (Estrada) down and discourage the masses from supporting him," Remulla said. ***With AFP reports***

Ombudsman asks . . .

(From page A1)

the GSIS and SSS into buying stocks from favored companies, including Belle Corp.

The Department of Justice is anchoring the new plunder charges on affidavits given by former SSS administrator Carlos Arellano and GSIS president Federico Pascual.

Desierto said the high court's order preventing him from filing criminal charges against Estrada was deemed lifted after the tribunal dismissed on March 2 Estrada's petition questioning the legitimacy of the Macapagal presidency.

The tribunal's ruling in favor of President Macapagal-Arroyo also means that Estrada "does not enjoy any form of immunity," Desierto said.

He said the Ombudsman special preliminary investigation panel would immediately file the charges against the ousted President once the Supreme Court's status quo order was lifted.

"But I could not reveal the recommendations of the panel so as not to preempt the Supreme Court on its decision on our urgent motion," Desierto said.

He announced the filing of the motion with the Supreme Court after a closed-door meeting with top officials of the Ombudsman and the Department of Justice yesterday.

The meeting, presided over by Desierto and Perez, discussed legal steps to go around the status quo order so that the government could immediately initiate criminal proceedings with the Sandiganbayan against Estrada and his co-respondents, including former First Lady Luisa "Loi" Ejercito and their son Jinggoy.

Perez also disclosed that Belle Corp. president Willie Ocier was set to sign an affidavit implicating Estrada.

"These are different transactions. But what's important is that all the money was given in consideration of some actions and some favors for Estrada," the justice secretary said.

Barangay Bandido

Civil society's impatience over the failure of the government to immediately prosecute Estrada prompted members of a cause-oriented group to don bandit-like attires to symbolize the gravity of Estrada's crimes against the Filipino people.

Shouting "*arestuhin si Erap* (arrest Estrada)," about 40 members of Barangay Bandido picketed the Office of the Ombudsman on Arroceros Street in Manila from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. yesterday.

The protesters were wearing improvised masks made of black cloth and buri *hats* like the ones worn by *Katipuneros*. They were armed with wooden swords (*gulok*).

Bobby Suntay, secretary general of Barangay Bandido, said that their costume symbolized the banditry allegedly committed by Estrada against the Filipinos.

"Thus, just like Robin Hood, he should give back to the people what belongs to them in the first place," he said.

FLAG

In Baguio City, the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), a critic of the death penalty, does not want Estrada to be executed if convicted for plunder, its former national chair told a civic club here Saturday.

But FLAG will exert all efforts to convict Estrada, according to lawyer Pablito Sanidad, former FLAG chair.

He said FLAG would pursue the charges regardless of their consequences to whistle-blower Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, who incriminated himself when he testified against Estrada at the impeachment trial.

"The penalty for plunder is death. If Estrada is convicted and sentenced to the maximum provided by the law on plunder, that's death. It's even nonbailable during the entire trial. But again, (FLAG) had always consistently taken a position against the death penalty," Sanidad told members of the Rotary Club of Baguio. ***With a report from Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Partisan policemen . . .

(From page A1)

honest elections."

"And it is my desire that the (Armed Forces) and the PNP will continue to remain neutral during elections and will concentrate only on keeping the peace and not letting politics influence the efficiency of our forces," she added.

The President was speaking in reference to reports that some police officers associated with former PNP chief and now senatorial candidate Panfilo Lacson had been actively aiding him during his campaign sorties in Mindanao.

But Rene Saguisag, lawyer of Ms Macapagal's disgraced predecessor Joseph Estrada, said Mendoza had "absolutely no moral ascendancy" to order his men to stop politicking.

In a statement, Saguisag noted that reports quoted Mendoza as having said: "If these reports (of police politicking) are true, then we will impose the appropriate sanctions on these erring policemen. Don't they know that they should remain neutral and should stay away from partisan politics?"

"(But) what Mendoza did in January 2000 was far, far worse. He plotted with the Vice President, then a Cabinet member, who wanted to be President as early as then," Saguisag said.

He was referring to Ms Macapagal's recent disclosure that she had been meeting with five different groups from the police and military, one led by Mendoza, since January last year.

Not electioneering

The President said that in a recent visit to Mindanao, a police regional director went up to her to say that he was "not electioneering," even he was reported to be doing just that in the newspapers.

She recalled telling Interior Secretary Joey Lina about this, to which Lina replied: "Very good. I hope that they know that we know."

Ms Macapagal also pointed out that with the Supreme Court voting 13-0 in upholding the legitimacy of her administration, it was now a time "to heal" and "to rebuild our nation."

"And the task is overpowering," she said. "We must therefore be one in our priorities, one in our values and commitment, and one in our effort to transform, to recover and then to grow."

She urged her audience not to "squander our gains at Edsa, when you were there with us," and to help bring about a united military and police force in the country.

The President also admitted that it was she who decided to name Rear Adm. Victorino Hingco as the new Navy chief.

"He was my personal choice," she said of Hingco, a member of the ROTC alumni association.

Not a role model

Saguisag said that "even as I write, many policemen and soldiers may be plotting, having seen the benefit of involving oneself in politics, given the plum that awaits them, such as what Mendoza obviously panted after, and got."

"The role model that is Mendoza should not complain," Saguisag said, adding:

"He politicked in a worse way, violated the Constitution and broke the chain of command. He has absolutely no moral ascendancy over his men whatsoever."

Saguisag also noted that "everyone and his uncle in the various armed services may have become politicos, leaving to a few professionals the task that needs to be done."

"You reap what you sow," he concluded.

Look who's afraid of 'dagdag-bawas'

(From page A1)

dagdag-bawas in the 1998 senatorial elections.

"But who are the experts in *dagdag-bawas*?" Pagdanganan asked. Honasan and fellow reelectionist Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile reportedly benefited from vote padding and shaving in the 1995 senatorial elections.

Honasan, a senatorial candidate of the opposition Puwersa ng Masa, said there were reports of overprinting of ballots and election returns.

For Honasan, the alleged excess ballots, President Macapagal-Arroyo's prediction of a 13-0 victory for administration candidates and the alleged hate campaign against allies of ousted President Joseph Estrada are "ominous signs" for the opposition.

"These are fears that we are trying to validate. But information is beginning to filter that there are attempts to railroad the elections," Honasan said.

"I hope these fears are unfounded. It will be better for all of us, especially the electorate, to be vigilant," he told reporters.

Honasan dismissed allegations that he benefited from *dagdag-bawas* operations in the 1995 elections.

"Those are criticisms that have been subjected to due process. I think this is not the time to revive issues of *dagdag-bawas*, we should be proactive and encourage all candidates, all political parties, including government itself, to ensure clean, credible and honest elections," Honasan said.

"If there's somebody who should be wary of *dagdag-bawas*, it should be us in the administration," said Pagdanganan, candidate of the People Power Coalition.

But he said Honasan's claim of overprinting of ballots should be investigated.

Pagdanganan lost to Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta in the 1998 senatorial elections. He sued. His campaign poster now says "Re-elect Obet" with the kicker "Fight Dagdag-Bawas."

"That should be looked into because those responsible for the bidding and printing of these election paraphernalia are appointees of Estrada," Pagdanganan said. "These Estrada appointees in the Comelec (Commission on Elections) should be the ones explaining these things to the people."

Pagdanganan said he had been urging new Comelec Chair Alfredo Benipayo to publish the voters' list and other information about the coming polls to ensure transparency and faith in the process.

But Honasan said it was the government which has the means to employ *dagdag-bawas*.

That's why he is criticizing Ms Macapagal for predicting a 13-0 sweep in favor of the PPC.

"These pronouncements are uncalled for in a democracy. It (sweep) simply does not happen," Honasan said.

He noted that former President Corazon Aquino, against whom he launched several coup attempts, did not predict a sweep by her senatorial candidates even at the height of her popularity.

Honasan is convinced that *dagdag-bawas* can only be employed by the incumbents.

"If you look at it realistically, it is government that has control over instrumentalities that can promote clean and honest elections. Whether they use these properly or not is a responsibility of government," he said.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ■ **EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA**, Assistant Editor

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

TENNIS: ATP Sybase Open, Semifinals at 10:30 p.m. on Star Sports
BASKETBALL: Chinese National Basketball League Semifinals at 3:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports
NBA - Seattle Supersonics vs Indiana Pacers at 5 p.m. (r) on ESPN
GOLF: PGA Genuity Championship, Second Round at 8 a.m. (r) on Star Sports
Golfglobe 2001 at 9:30 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Raptors topple Knicks

TORONTO — Vince Carter scored 25 points and the Toronto Raptors won their fifth straight game Sunday, a 98-88 victory over a New York Knicks team that again played without Marcus Camby. The teams met for the first time since exchanging point guards at the Feb. 22 trade deadline. *AP*

Complete results: Utah 118, Washington 98; New Jersey 120, Indiana 96; Charlotte 116, Boston 97; Detroit 93, Orlando 84; Minnesota 119, Seattle 111, OT; Miami 91, Cleveland 79; L.A. Lakers 110, Golden State 95.

NO PAIN, NO GAIN DENNIS SABANGAN.

Danny Ildefonso of San Miguel Beer grimaces in pain after getting whacked in the face by a Pop Cola guard in the PBA All-Filipino Conference on Sunday. Ildefonso recovered in time to power the Beermen to a 78-63 victory. In the nightcap, Tanduay escaped with an 88-85 double overtime victory over Sta. Lucia Realty.

SEAG budget may hit ₱100M

THE COUNTRY'S allocation for the Southeast Asian Games could skyrocket to as high as P100 million.

Expenses will include training, international exposure and equipment.

Commissioner Richie Garcia, spearheading the Philippine Sports Commission side in the joint PSC-Philippine Olympic Committee SEAG Task Force, said yesterday that the amount was needed as the PSC accepted 155 athletes into the national training pool.

He said the 155 would join the 188 qualified athletes who met the bronze medal standard in snagging a slot in the national team.

Earlier, the projected delegation to the biennial meet would number more than 350, including 106 officials.

Garcia said that of the P100-million SEA Games budget, P20 million will go to the week-long Games set in Kuala Lumpur in September.

He said that of the new 155 athletes entered, only 50 percent could "possibly meet" the grade when the final submission of entries is made in July.

"Once they surpass the standards, we will include them in the list," Garcia said. "They could perform well in the Games you know."

Last week, after purging the list of aspirants, only 188 were found to have either passed or equalled the bronze medal criteria set by the task force. *June Navarro*

Prisaa begins today

CHAIR Butch Tuason of the Philippine Sports Commission will be the guest of honor and speaker during the opening ceremonies of the Private Schools Athletic Association at 3 p.m. today at the Angeles University Gymnasium in Angeles City.

Dr. Emmanuel Y. Angeles, Prisaa national president, said the ceremonies will start with the doxology and singing of the Pambansang Awit by the AUF Performing Arts to be followed by the words of welcome and introduction of the guest of honor and speaker.

The oath of sportsmanship will be led by Christian Rivera, team captain of the AUF basketball team, while the oath of technical officials will be administered by Dr. Anthony R. Nicanor, Prisaa national commissioner.

The AUF Performing Arts and the University of Batangas Cheering Squad will be providing entertainment during the program.

About 700 athletes from private colleges and universities representing the National Capital Region, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao Clusters will compete in the following sports events: baseball, basketball, volleyball, athletics, swimming, taekwondo, chess, lawn and table tennis. Another highlight is the search for the Mutya ng Prisaa 2001 which will be staged on Friday, March 9, 6:30 p.m. at the AUF Activity Center.

Impatient Salud writes Sulaiman

RUDY Salud, manager of WBC International super flyweight champion Gerry Peñalosa, has written WBC president Jose Sulaiman to inquire about the exact fight date between Japan's Masamori Tokuyama and North Korea's In Joo Cho.

Salud said the fight promoters "have had more than enough time" since the WBC convention last October "to settle the issue with the North Korean government" in keeping with an agreement to stage the fight in Pyongyang.

Peñalosa's manager told Sulaiman: "It is unfair to keep Peñalosa in limbo not knowing whether he is to fight Tokuyama next or that he needs an interim fight with another opponent to keep in shape."

Salud called on Sulaiman to "remind" promoter Kusung Lee that "the authority to have a Tokuyama-In Joo Choo championship with official challenger Peñalosa stepping aside" was based on holding the fight in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

Salud said that if the fight could not be held in Pyongyang, "then it is only fair that the mandatory defense of Tokuyama be held in May against the official challenger, Peñalosa.

Salud said that the fight could " either be held in Japan where Tokuyama is based or the Philippines," with In Joo Cho getting a crack at the winner.

Peñalosa's manager said he needs a decision by the WBC "soonest" since the next fight of Peñalosa tentatively scheduled for May "is currently on hold until the issue is resolved."

Salud expressed confidence that Sulaiman and the WBC will decide the case "under the rules and with utmost fairness."

Garcia karting champion

CARMONA, Cavite—Jess Garcia of Kart.1 finally achieved superstar status by ruling the kickoff leg even as Tyson Sy of Demvel's completed a double victory in the 2001 Shell Super Karting Championships before a huge weekend crowd at the Carmona Racing Circuit here Sunday.

Garcia, who finished only fourth overall last year, unveiled a new-found reputation and child-like enthusiasm to frustrate the Demvel's duo of Jess Cabalinan and Mon Tanjuatco in the centerpiece Formula Super A category.

The 28-year old lawyer-son of Cebu City Mayor Pablo Garcia clocked 20:43.844 in the 20-lap final race against Cabalinan's 20:48.383 and Tanjuatco's 20:53.369.

"It's a good way to start the (karting) season. I was very excited to win this season-opening races against some of the best karters around," said Garcia, who was left to carry the fight for Kart 1 following the decision of last year's champion Philip Alvendia to concentrate on the team competition this year.

"I just hope I can sustain the momentum until the final leg," added the Cebu-based Garcia, who took up karting seriously in 1997.

Garcia's equally popular teammate, Allan Uy, also dominated the Intercon category against veteran Mario Cunanan and actor-turned-sportsman Dominic Ochoa.

Uy timed 20:50.883, followed by Cunanan with 21:03.959 and Ochoa with 21:12.961.

Three Demvel's riders—Angelo Barretto, Victor Yap and Manuel Borja—also stamped their class against their respective rivals.

Mandaluyong to host Ucap derby today

MANDALUYONG Coliseum, now recognized by aficionados for staging fast-paced and quality fights, presents the 6th Ucap/Firebird Anito BM 6-Cock Derby beginning at 6 p.m. today with Sagupaan Super Feeds and Lakpue Drug Inc. as sponsors.

A jampacked crowd is expected to witness the two-day cockfest since this is the only big-time derby slated in Metro Manila today. Derby hosts are hotelier Biboy Enriquez and Palawan sportsman Mauro Prieto.

Meanwhile, the popular "main derby" of the '60s and '70s era will be resurrected at Mandaluyong Coliseum on March 15 via the "Ucap Excess Derby."

For inquiries, please contact 747-4797, 534-4110, 531-4003 and 531-4005.

200 join La Salle golfest at Sta. Elena

AT least 200 De La Salle alumni participated in the "Golf for the Green" tournament yesterday at the Sta. Elena Golf Club.

Organized by Class '76, the 18-hole tournament was one of the major activities of DLSU this year, culminating with the DLSAA homecoming on Saturday at the main campus on Taft Avenue.

Among the scratch and low handicap players were former national champion Tommy Manotoc, Alex Prieto, Tony Olives, Jun Cedo, Dickey Dizon and Luigi Tabuena. Duffers like former Philippine Sports Commission chair and IBC 13 vice chair Philip Ella Juico, Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit, National Golf Association of the Philippines president Rod Feliciano, Vic Vic Villavicencio and Rey Bautista also took part.

Terry Capistrano and Virgil Villavicencio coordinated the golfest, which offered a Toyota Echo and a Mizuno, courtesy of sportsman Benny Gopez, golf set as hole-in-one prizes.

Brother J. Benedict, vice president for Development and Alumni Affairs, gave a pep talk before tee off.

Durant ties Tiger record

MIAMI—Joe Durant certainly qualifies as a slow starter. At age 36, his PGA success story has just begun.

Durant closed with a 7-under-par 65 Sunday in driving winds and rain to win the Genuity Championship, becoming the first player since Tiger Woods last summer to win consecutive starts on the PGA Tour.

More importantly, the win earned Durant $ 810,000, enough to lead the PGA Tour money list and qualify for the Masters.

"This is beyond anything I could have imagined, to be quite honest," said Durant, who finished 18 under and 2 strokes ahead of Canada's Mike Weir, who finished with a 71.

Vijay Singh (67), Jeff Sluman (70) and Hal Sutton (72) were 4 shots back. "Joe played terrific golf and did everything right," Slumen said.

Durant's journey to the top of the money list was far from ordinary. In 1991, after recording just one Top 10 finish in 27 stops on what is now the Buy.com Tour, Durant spent six months away from golf. *AP*

Mandaluyong A paces Inter-Cities chess meet

STANDINGS AFTER ROUND 2

2.0 points—Mandaluyong A, Manila, Davao City, Angeles (Air Force) A, Antipolo City, Bacolod City, Muntinlupa B.

1.5 —Muntinlupa A, Mandaluyong B, Baguio City

1.0— Makati City-Shell, Mandaue, Caloocan-Gonzales Law Office, Panabo, Guagua, QC Vice Mayor Angeles, Angeles (Air Force) B, Bocaue, Binan/Sta. Rosa, Tagbilaran, Cainta, Muntinlupa C, Tacloban City, Mandaluyong C, Koronadal.

FAVORITE Mandaluyong A, drawing inspiration from Grandmaster Joey Antonio, coasted to a 3-1 victory over Bocaue yesterday to share top spot with eight other teams in the 2001 National Inter-Cities and Municipalities Chess team Championship at the Kaban ng Hiyas Auditorium, Mandaluyong City.

Antonio downed NM Roland Joseph Perez as expected in Board 1, even as teammates IM Idelfonso Datu and Liolen Tubianosa also hurdled their Board 2 and 3 rivals in the second round.

Bocaue averted a shutout through Cris Palma, who bested Edmundo Gatus in Board 4.

"One escaped. But its okay, we'll try to do better in the third round," said Antonio, team captain of Mandaluyong A which nipped Shell-Makati, 2.5-1.5, in the first round of the tournament sponsored by Viva Mineral Water, Unilab Inc. DILG and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Sharing the limelight with Mandaluyong A was Manila, one of four teams which posted a sweep yesterday.

The second-ranked Manila, powered by IMs Richard Bitoon and Barlo Nadera, blanked Iloilo City, 4-0, to score seven wins in eight games. Manila thumped Muntinlupa C, 3-1, Sunday.

Bitoon dumped NM Cesar Mariano in Board 1, while Nadera beat NM Ernesto Jayme in Board 2. Roland Salvador and Virgilio Vuelban completed Manila's romp.

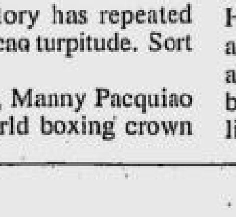
Other teams which prevailed by shutout were Muntinlupa A over Cagayan de Oro, Makati-Shell over RP Women and Mandaue over San Jose, Del Monte.

The tournament is organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines headed by GM Eugene Torre, who spearheads Baguio City. *Roy Luarca*

TORRE: Baguio's pride.

Tuñacao turpitude

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

RUDY PROJECT. The sportswriters who covered the recent 54th PAL Golf Interclub in Cebu City wish to convey their gratitude to Gabriele Boschi, the extremely friendly Italian lad, who, through the unselfish efforts of Freeman sports editor Nimrod NL Quiñones, donated world-class Rudy Project golf sunglasses and Italian-made trophies to the participants and winners of the PAL Media Golf Tournament topped by Ding Marcelo. It was a momentous occasion, indeed, as it was not only Ding who went home with Gabriele's much sought-after Rudy Project shades but also all 14 or so scribes who joined the tournament. Thanks and ciao, Gabriele.

■

SOME LOSERS lose because of a valid reason. Some merely give alibis.

Malcolm Tuñacao had a valid reason when he lost his world flyweight crown to a Thai in Thailand last week. If the reports were true, he was overweight before and during fight time. Why he allowed himself to be overweight makes me puke.

To just clinch the chance to go for the world crown is already a big feat. Tuñacao got that chance last year and went on to knock out a Thai in the seventh round to capture the title. That feat almost made him the PSA's Athlete of the Year for 2000.

To win a world crown is the hardest to achieve in boxing. To retain it in your first defense is even harder. So, to be so careless as to take your weight for granted as the fight approaches is simply unacceptable. You are the world champion. Your first duty is to watch your weight. If non-champions like Oca Orbos and Ted Cruz can keep their weights under check, what more with world champions like Tuñacao?

Am beginning to believe that most boxers have their brains on their soles.

Actually, history has repeated itself in the Tuñacao turpitude. Sort of.

A while back, Manny Pacquiao lost his own world boxing crown even before he could climb a similar ring in Thailand. He didn't make the weight during the official weigh-in and was declared loser by default. Because rules required Pacquiao to still face the challenger, Pacquiao became a pathetic sight during the fight.

But while Pacquiao lasted more than five rounds, Tuñacao was good only for less than a round. Tuñacao kissed the canvas three times to lose by an automatic knockout. The country thus lost its remaining world boxing champion. Not to the Thai challenger, actually, but to Tuñacao's own folly. He made the 112 pound limit but not after drastically shedding 8 pounds in hours. He immediately pigged on Thai food and ballooned beyond 112 pounds at fight time. The excess poundage became excess baggage that hung like an albatross around Tuñacao's neck when the bell rang for the fight to start.

No, I will not blame his handlers totally. Tuñacao will always be the first and last to blame. Handlers do not do the fighting. Fighters do.

Great champions are great thinkers, too. Muhammad Ali was like that so that he became the game's greatest practitioner. Include the likes of Rocky Marciano, Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvin Hagler to name only a few.

I hate to say this but Tuñacao ought to have his head examined. Why he allowed himself to balloon to 120 pounds—that is 8 pounds over the 112 limit—four days before the fight was not the act of a sane man.

He fell for Thai's spicy foods? Spare me.

GMA
GUMISING KA NA!

Pahayag ng mga Maliliit na Magniniyog
ukol sa mga Bagong Appointees sa UCPB

Kaming mga maliliit na magniniyog ay hindi nasisiyahan sa naging pasya ni Pangulong Gloria Macapagal Arroyo hinggil sa komposisyon ng bagong Board of Directors ng United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB). Malinaw na hindi isinaalang-alang ng Pangulo ang kapakanan naming mga maliliit na magsasaka.

Mayorya ng bagong UCPB Board ay walang direktang kaugnayan at nalalaman sa matagal na paghihirap at pakikibaka ng mga maliliit na magniniyog upang mapaunlad ang sektor ng niyugan. Tinatalikuran na ba ng Pangulo ang pagsulong ng interes at pag-angat ng kabuhayan ng mga maliliit na magniniyog? Sa halip na magluklok siya sa UCPB Board ng mga kinatawang mangangalaga sa kapakanan ng mga magsasaka, mas pinili pa niyang gamitin ang pagtatalaga ng appointees sa UCPB Board bilang balato para sa kanyang mga malalapit na kaibigan!

Ang UCPB ay itinatag bilang bangko ng maliliit na magniniyog. Naitatag ito mula sa buwis na sapilitang siningil mula sa kanila ng pamahalaang Marcos. Katunayan, sa 99 porsyento ng UCPB shares of stock na nasa ilalim ng sequestration ng gobyerno, mahigit sa 60 porsyento ang kinakatawan ng mga maliliit na magniniyog.

Matitiyak lamang na magagampanan ng UCPB ang kanyang mandato bilang bangko ng mga magniniyog kung malakas at makabuluhan ang representasyon ng maliliit na magsasaka sa pamunuan nito. Lalong matindi ang pangangailangang panghawakan ng mga magsasaka ang UCPB ngayong malaking krisis ang kinakaharap ng industriya at *hindi na kayang makabuhay ng pamilya ng napakababang presyo at kita mula sa kopra*. Inaasahan namin na magamit ang pondo ng bangko upang maitatag ang isang "copra social investment fund" na susuporta sa amin.

Mas matinding dagok din sa mga maliliit na magniniyog ang kautusang nilabas kamakailan ng Sandiganbayan na pumanig sa mga pribadong grupo na kumakatawan sa mga panginoong maylupa. Nangangamba ang mga magbubukid na muli na namang masasailalim sa kontrol ng mga panginoong maylupa ang UCPB—mawawalan ng representasyon ang mga maliliit na magniniyog dito. Kung kaya't umaapila kami sa Korte Suprema na desisyunan na ang usapin hinggil sa coconut levy nang pabor sa mga maliliit na magniniyog sa pamamagitan ng pagdedeklara sa levy funds bilang pondong pampubliko.

Hindi na kami makapaghihintay. Lumalalim ang krisis sa industriya ng niyog at agarang aksyon ang kailangan. Hinihingi namin ang agarang paghirang ng mga kinatawan sa UCPB Board na mula sa aming hanay.

Kung patuloy na isasantabi ng Pangulo ang mga lehitimong karaingan naming milyun-milyong magsasaka at manggagawa sa niyugan, hindi kami mangingiming bumalik sa lansangan at magsagawa ng mas radikal na pagkilos kung ito lamang ang porma ng mensaheng pakikinggan ng mga nasa katungkulan.

KILOS-SAKA

(Alyansa ng mga Kilusang Magsasaka)

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ONE TOUCH
302

ALCATEL

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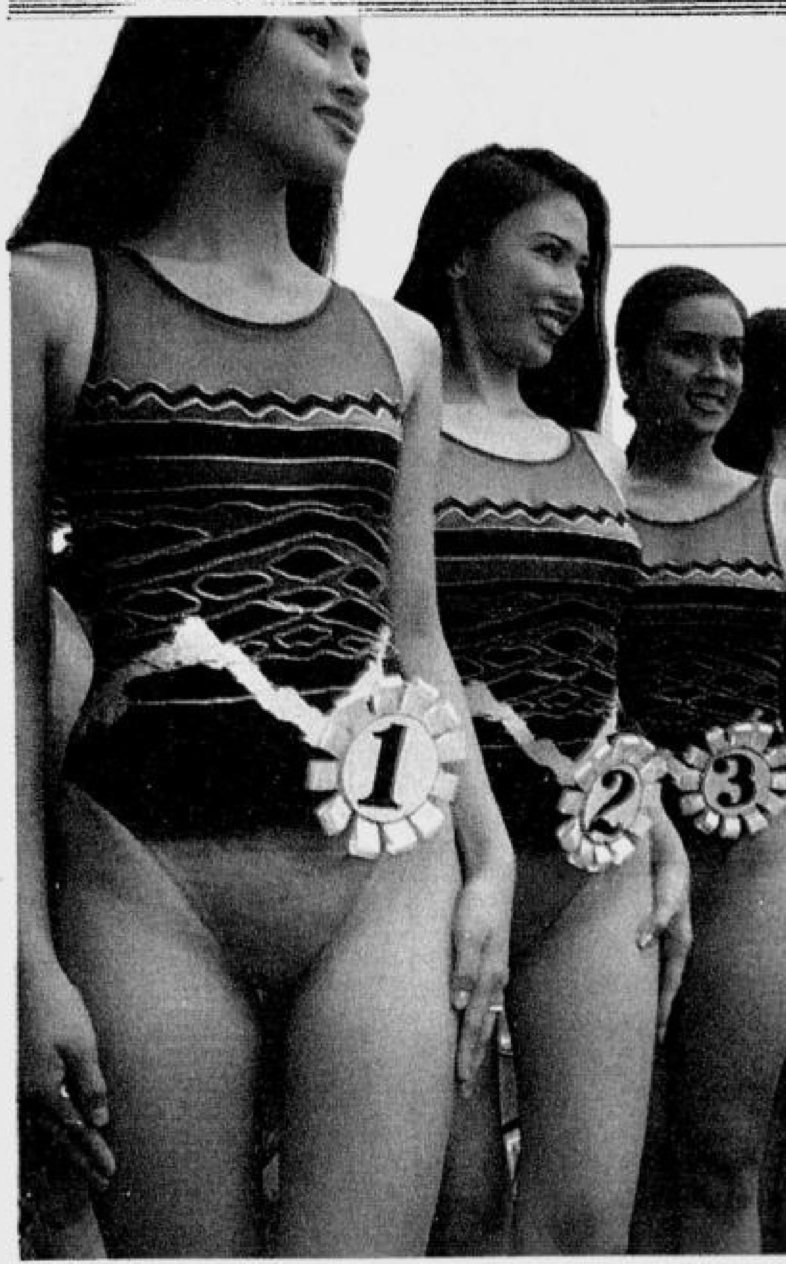
METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

MMDA gets $7-M loan for waste management A18



ERNIE SARMIENTO

SHAPE OF SUMMER

It's summer and candidates in the Bb. Pilipinas 2001 beauty pageant bare their shapely assets to the delight of lensmen and an excited crowd at the poolside of the Dusit Hotel in Makati. Winners will be crowned on March 10 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Cops hunt down 'richest' janitor

BY DAVE M. VERIDIANO

POLICE are hunting down Pasay City's "richest" janitor after a raid on his makeshift room inside a high-class condominium yielded some P10 million worth of shabu over the weekend.

The janitor, known only as "Dodie," managed to escape when the Pasay City Police's anti-narcotics unit raided the Sommerset Condominium Mansion Tower 1 on Leveriza Street, Pasay City.

The suspect reportedly kept his multimillion-peso stash at the condo's electrical room on the 6th floor.

Supt. Alejandro Gutierrez, chief of Pasay City police, said although they failed to catch Dodie during the raid, they were able to bag about four and a half kilos of shabu in five plastic packs.

In a report to Southern Police District director Chief Supt. Manuel Cabigon, Gutierrez believed Dodie is a member of the 14K drug syndicate, some of whose members—mostly Chinese—were arrested by the National Bureau of Investigation in the same condominium last December.

"Although he was only a janitor and a caretaker, Dodie appears to be living in style compared to his colleagues," Gutierrez said.

The illegal drugs were cleverly concealed between high-tension wires inside the electrical junction box which supplies power to the entire condominium, police said.

Gutierrez said he ordered the raid on the condo after he received reports that the janitor often stayed inside the electrical room on the 6th floor even if he had no business there.

The police official added Dodie was always seen carrying plastic bags in and out of the room.

Police later confirmed that the janitor was working for a drug syndicate and he was using the electrical room to hide his stash.

Senior Insp. Reynaldo Baral led a team of narcotics police and coordinated with the building owners to arrest the janitor and seize the illegal drugs.

But the janitor somehow got wind of the raid and escaped, police said.

A technician at the SPD crime laboratory confirmed that the seized drugs were pure methamphetamine hydrochloride, weighing about four kilos and 541 grams worth P8,173,800 when sold to a dealer, or about P12 million if sold directly to users.

Police said they are now closing in on the fugitive janitor.

Suicide not an Atenean, say school authorities

THE ATENEO De Manila University yesterday denied that the 19-year-old woman who committed suicide on Saturday in Quezon City was one of their students.

Sheila de la Cruz, 19, of Matino Street, Teacher's Village in Quezon City, shot herself in the back of her ear, investigator SPO1 Robert D. Cajiles told the INQUIRER on Sunday.

De la Cruz died at the Philippine Heart Center after six hours of surgery.

Police investigation also identified De la Cruz as a student of the Ateneo.

But Rene Salvador R. San Andres, Ateneo's associate dean for student affairs, said in a statement that the Sheila de la Cruz in the news item was not the Sheila de la Cruz who was enrolled in the university's Masteral Program in the mid-'90s.

"She is now 29 years old, very much alive, and happily married. She currently works for Tricom Dynamics, a company in Makati, as an assistant manager," the statement said.

The Central Police District (CPD) records, however, showed that Sheila Magdangal de la Cruz was a student of the Ateneo. But the INQUIRER has not been able to determine her course and year level as the case investigator was not present at that time.

The desk officer at the CPD-Criminal Investigation Unit also said De la Cruz was an Ateneo student.

The young woman's father, fishpond owner Allan de la Cruz, later told police that his daughter had indeed taken her own life. He asked police to respect the family's privacy and assured them he would cooperate in their investigation after the period of mourning.

Philip C. Tubeza

Gangsterism hogs Caloocan polls

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

CALOOCAN Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo yesterday warned residents that voting an Asistio into office would bring back "warlordism and Erap-style politics" in the city.

Malonzo, who is running for reelection, said only his "champion team" composed of anti-Estrada politicians and show business personalities could ensure that the Asistio dynasty—and "gangsterism"—would finally come to an end.

"If the people doesn't want warlordism, gangsterism, and notoriety back in Caloocan, don't vote Asistio," he told the INQUIRER.

Like ousted President Estrada, Malonzo said Asistio is used to making skin-deep promises.

"It's trapo-style, Erap-style politics," Malonzo claimed.

Malonzo said Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio, his opponent in the mayoral race, allegedly has a long history of notoriety dating back to his teenage years.

MALONZO

ASISTIO

He said Asistio, a member of the notorious "Big 4" gang in the 1960s, was jailed for 12 years on kidnapping charges.

"Asistio is a criminal. He's a self-confessed gambler," Malonzo said.

Asistio was in the United States and was unavailable for comment.

Allan Encarnacion, head of Asistio's media affairs bureau, said the lawmaker had always admitted his "mistakes" during campaigns and "the people have accepted him for who he is."

"He has long paid for his mistakes. He's a changed man. He would not have been voted for three consecutive terms if the people did not believe in him," Encarnacion told the INQUIRER.

He said Caloocan residents should instead keep an eye on Malonzo and his men for they are "the real gangsters at the city hall" and are "terrorizing the local government's coffers."

Malonzo also criticized Asistio's sons Peting and Pachot, who have had their brushes with the law.

"It's not a new issue actually. His sons are on a rampage because they know their father is in office. What more if he becomes mayor?" he said.

Asistio had Pachot arrested late last week on drug and robbery charges filed against him by a Chinese businesswoman.

Last year, Pachot was the subject of a police manhunt after he shot his landlord during a heated argument.

Peting, on the other hand, was shot during a drug buy-bust operation early last year.

"The congressman is not tolerating his sons. He is even the one who has been asking police to arrest his sons if they get into any trouble. Malonzo is just using them to destroy the congressman," Encarnacion said.

Wazzzzup?

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TUESDAY, March 06 912-8983

Love angle eyed in motorbike killing

POLICE are determining if there was a love motive behind the death of a 50-year-old man who was shot while riding a motorcycle with his girlfriend in Isla Putting Bato, Tondo, Manila the other night.

The victim, who died on the spot after taking a bullet in the head, was identified as Ignacio Puzo, a resident of 601 Sta. Prudenciana St., Intramuros, Manila.

SPO1 Danilo Vidad, case investigator, said Puzo and his girlfriend Juliegen Pabilan, 27, were cruising at the northern portion of Dulong Isla in Putting Bato around 9 p.m. when an unidentified man brandishing a pistol blocked their path.

When the suspect fired in their direction, Puzo and Pabilan jumped from the motorcycle and tried to seek cover in a nearby alley.

However, the suspect pursued the lovers and caught up with Puzo, whom he shot in the head.

The gunman fled after the incident.

LOVE ANGLE/A18

Erap will make his bets win

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE military saw things which were not there when it said deposed President Estrada planned to fly to Indonesia from Davao City using a chartered jet.

Erap had no such plans—then. He was told that the Supreme Court would rule he was unseated unconstitutionally and illegally.

That's why he looked shocked, according to reports, when he received the news in Cagayan de Oro City that the high court had ruled on the legitimacy of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's presidency.

***

How could Erap have planned to leave the country when he was too preoccupied with campaigning for his wife Loi and the other senatorial candidates of the opposition?

His preoccupation in making opposition candidates win was such that he started his campaign in Mindanao because his popularity has not diminished in the second biggest island.

The people in Mindanao have not forgotten the attention Erap had given it when he was still in power.

***

But that was then, before the Supreme Court ruled Ms Macapagal's legitimacy as President of the Philippines.

Erap was banking on the fact that if the high court ruled in his favor he would be immune from suits.

And since the high tribunal has reduced him to the status of an ordinary citizen, Erap can now be charged with plunder. Under our laws, plunder is similar to murder; it's an unbailable offense and the penalty is death.

***

With the Supreme Court ruling, Erap is now probably having second thoughts about not leaving the country.

He can seek refuge in countries where the Philippines does not have an extradition treaty.

He can't hide in the US because we have an extradition treaty with the US. Ironically, he didn't respect our extradition treaty with the United States when he protected his crony Mark Jimenez, who was a fugitive from justice in the US.

***

But if Erap continues to campaign for the opposition slate despite the setback he suffered in the high court, he will likely get many of his candidates to win.

Erap is still very popular among the *masa*. Many poor and uneducated voters will go for Erap's candidates because they still believe in him.

The opposition slate will get the bigger share of the votes because of sympathy for Erap. Filipinos root for the underdog. The perception among the poor and illiterate voters is that Erap is a martyr because he is being persecuted by the government.

***

Erap will make use of his acting prowess in making his candidates win. He will cry before the voters. He will appeal to their sense of pity.

And the voters, mostly the illiterate who compose the majority of our voters, will believe him.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel is right. More opposition candidates will win in the May elections.

***

Already, political analysts say opposition candidates who are most likely to make it to the "Magic 13" are Loi Estrada, Dong Puno, Ping Lacson, Noli de Castro, Ed Angara and Blas Ople.

These people are "sure winners," political analysts say, because of name recall.

If Erap campaigns harder, he'll be able to add to the winning opposition candidates.

The May elections will be an acid test of how popular the Macapagal administration is to the majority of the Filipinos.

***

In Palawan, opposition candidate Edward Hagedorn is leading by the mile in the race for governor of the province, according to my sources there.

This, despite the fact that he stuck with Erap up to the last minute.

The other gubernatorial candidates are Joel Reyes, the incumbent governor, and Rep. Amor Abueg of the second district.

Hagedorn is an example of a candidate who will win despite his being closely identified with the former president. He will probably win because of it.

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METROBRIEFS

NBI agent, 6 others nabbed

FOR VIOLATING the elections gun ban, an agent of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and six other people, including a 16-year-old girl, were arrested in different places in Manila over the weekend.

NBI agent Mamintal Dabao, 33, married, of 103 Mujahidien St., Culiat, Quezon City, and assigned to the bureau's Special Investigation Division, was caught with an unlicensed .45 pistol inside the Masagana Supermarket on Kalaw Street corner Taft Avenue about 5:30 p.m. Friday, police said.

Authorities also arrested six Maranaos, including a 16-year-old girl, after they were found with a hand grenade, a pistol and a sachet allegedly containing shabu at a police checkpoint in Quiapo, Manila about 12:15 a.m. on Sunday.

Camid Salik, 33; Asis Mampao, 19; Ecibaerio Bertud, 35; Francis Morter, 32; Raquel Cabigona, 27; and the 16-year-old girl—all of Olongapo City—NBI agent Dabao have been detained and charged for violating Presidential Decree 1866 and Section 322 of the Omnibus Election Code, police said. *Jerome Aning*

Jealous man kills driver

A JEALOUS Marlon Trinidad, 29, stabbed to death on Sunday night truck driver Diosdado Briones, 39, of Packwood Site in Muntinlupa, PO2 Arnel Pisigan reported yesterday.

Briones was said to have started courting Trinidad's live-in lover and became close to her, police said.

When Trinidad saw the two talking alone on Sunday, he became enraged, took a knife, and stabbed to death Briones, police said.

Trinidad is now detained at the Muntinlupa jail and is facing murder charges. *Alcuin Papa*

2 rookie cops slay amok

ROOKIE policemen PO2 Antonio Cruz Jr. and PO1 Benjamin Medina shot dead Aguido Soriaga, 46, who was said to have run amuck inside his house in Gagalangin in Tondo, Manila, and threatened to kill his relatives with a kitchen knife.

Soriaga died from several bullet wounds in the body at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, said PO3 Rodello Lingcong of the Western Police District homicide section.

Soriaga went wild at about 6:30 on Friday, said his relatives, who called police for assistance.

Police said the rookie cops gained permission from Soriaga's family to break down the door of the bedroom where Soriaga had locked himself up. *Jerome Aning*

Man kills nephew

FACTORY worker Jimmy Herarca, 39, stabbed dead his nephew Jesus Bugillon, 36, in Malabon on Sunday night, said case investigator PO2 Redentor Mantala Jr. of the Malabon Police Station.

Police said Bugillon and his wife Jovita, of Gov. Pascual Avenue in Barangay Tinajeron in Malabon, went to the suspect's house also on Gov. Pascual Avenue to confront the uncle who was said to be spreading rumors that the victim's mother had died in Pangasinan.

Herarca got mad and argued with Bugillon. The two almost came to blows but the neighbors intervened, police said.

Bugillon and his wife left and were already walking along Gov. Pascual Avenue when Heraraca, who had a fan knife, allegedly blocked their path and stabbed his nephew repeatedly, police said.

Police are now hunting down Heraraca who escaped after the stabbing. *Christian V. Esguerra*

MMDA gets $7-M loan for waste management

By Agnes E. Donato

THE ASIAN Development Bank has promised to lend at least $7 million to finance the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's solid waste management program, chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. reported yesterday.

Abalos claimed that $5 million of the cash promised was already available and could be used as soon as the MMDA project was put into place.

"There is more to follow, depending on the amount that the MMDA would need," he said.

The ADB, Abalos said, has not specified any particular approach to the garbage problem that it wanted the MMDA to utilize.

"The ADB is willing to finance any project that the MMDA would choose to undertake, as long as it is viable and approved by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources," he said.

Abalos stressed that the MMDA, not the national government, would be the one to shoulder the payment of the "soft" loan, which would be payable in around 25 years.

The MMDA chair also expressed his misgivings about the use of a common disposal area as composting plant for the garbage of the entire Metro Manila, citing the traffic problem it could cause and the resistance from local residents that often meets such proposals.

"Wouldn't it be better if we have composting plants in various places? That way, the garbage trucks will not have to go to the same area to dump garbage and the garbage will not be concentrated in one place," he explained.

Abalos complained that the MMDA has been having a hard time getting local officials to agree on having a composting plant in their respective area because of the possible political repercussions it may cause them, especially with the elections coming.

Meanwhile, Abalos yesterday laid down plans to convert the metropolis into a tourist spot, citing the establishment of night flea markets for tourists and restaurants by the Laguna Lake.

Abalos reported that he had already agreed to a proposal of Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez to put up a night market in front of the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran.

But he clarified that, if the market would be allowed to operate at night, it should first have an accreditation from the Department of Tourism.

"I want it to be included in the DOT brochure so that tourists would know that there is such a place where they can go to at nighttime," Abalos said.

He added that Marquez has proposed that the flea market be opened nightly. He also stressed that the place would be well-lit and vendors would be made to wear proper uniform.

He also expressed hope that the street vendors presently occupying the vicinity would be employed in the proposed flea market.

Abalos also yesterday urged the cultural offices of each city and municipality of Metro Manila to coordinate with the DOT, so they could come up with a program that would showcase Metro Manila culture at the Intramuros every night.

Abalos also cited plans to put up floating restaurants by the Laguna Lake, which the customers could access through a boat ride by the Pasig River.

Killer cabbie gets life term

VALENZUELA regional trial court has sentenced to life imprisonment a taxi driver who robbed and killed one of his passengers three years ago.

Judge Adriano Osorio of RTC Branch 172 found Roberto Pasion, 35, of Santo Rosario Street, Karuhatan, Valenzuela, guilty of robbery with homicide.

But Osorio acquitted Pasion's brother-in-law Simplicio Linda, 43, owner of the Isuzu Highlander which the accused was driving.

Linda was implicated when he claimed he was the one driving the taxi when the incident occurred.

Victims Marion Fabile of Dagat-Dagatan, Caloocan, and Edmund Quesada of Tondo, Manila, boarded Pasion's taxi in Pasay City on Jan. 18, 1998 and asked the driver to take them to Caloocan City.

The victims fell asleep and were awakened when Pasion was robbing them of their valuables at knifepoint in Karuhatan, Valenzuela, at about 2 a.m.

When Quesada resisted, Pasion stabbed him. Quesada died on the spot while Fabile was stabbed three times.

Pasion abandoned the taxi and fled. Fabile then sought assistance from a nearby barangay outpost.

In his defense, Pasion claimed he only acted in self-defense. The accused said the victims were the ones who tried to rob him, but he was able to wrest the knife from them.

But Osorio dismissed Pasion's alibi, noting his failure to immediately report the incident, which was "unusual."

The judge also ordered Pasion to pay Fabile and Quesada's family P108,084 in damages.

Christian Esguerra

SACRIFICIAL SWINE ERIK ARAZAS

Indigenous people from Mindoro offer a pig's head during a rally in Mendiola to stop government from implementing the Mining Act of 1995, which had led to the exploitation of their environment.

NBI rescues 3 minors from sex ring

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation busted a white slavery syndicate based in Laoag City and rescued three minors who were forced to work as sex slaves.

The minors—Sherilyn, 14, Geraldine, 16, and Estela, 17—were being sold to foreigners in a night strip in Pagudpud, the northernmost town of Ilocos Norte famous for its beaches.

NBI Anti-Organized Crime Division led by lawyer Samuel Fiji arrested five syndicate members in separate operations on Feb. 28 and 29.

The suspects were identified as ex-army Master Sergeant Clemente P. Carino, 49, operator of Three Ace Disco and Videoke Bar in Laoag City; Levi Diocena, 45, the bar's floor manager and resident of Juan Luna Street, Laoag; bar employee Rosalie David, 21, of Sapang Palay, Bulacan;

Rhea Bermejo, 31, of Pagudpud and Angela Benedito, 31, of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, both bar waitresses and caretakers of a videoke bar in Pagudpud.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco had already charged the suspects before the Department of Justice for violating Republic Act 7610, also known as the law on recruiting minors for child labor and prostitution.

The suspects were taken to Manila for questioning. But the NBI released them yesterday after the DOJ found out the suspects have yet to undergo preliminary investigation in the places where they were arrested.

Fiji said the operations came about when Alejandro W. Apit, executive director of Kamalayan Development Foundation Inc., filed a formal complaint with the NBI-AOCD.

Kamalayan is a non-government organization against child labor and other forms of child exploitation in the country.

In the complaint, Apit said a woman claimed her daughters Sherilyn and Geraldine disappeared in January.

"Information received by the bureau revealed that the two were allegedly recruited by a lady, identified as Rosalie David," Fiji said. "But another lady brought them to Laoag City to work as guest relations officer in a karaoke bar."

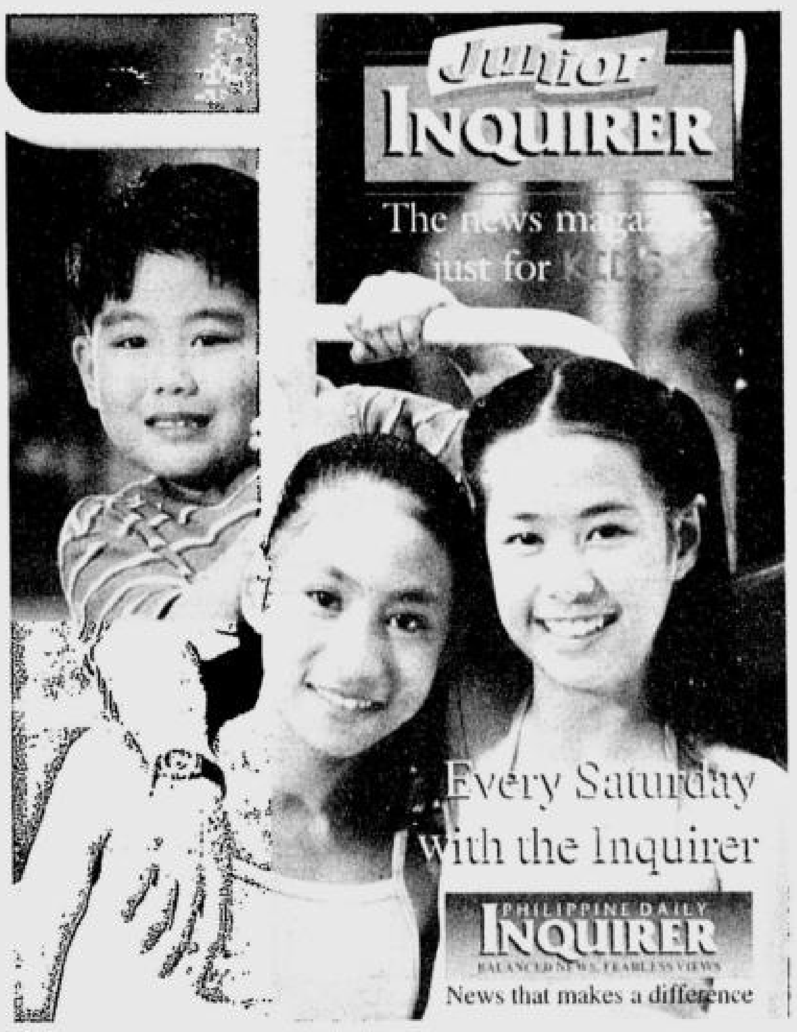
Fiji said the minors were occasionally taken to a videoke bar in a beach resort in Pagudpud "to cater to the sexual needs" of foreign tourists.

On Feb. 28, AOCD agents in coordination with the NBI-Laoag City District Office and local police rescued Sherilyn and Geraldine while they were entertaining customers at the Three Ace Disco and Videoke bar in Laoag City.

AOCD agents also rescued another minor, Estela.

Club operator Carino and his floor manager, "Mama Sang" Diocena, were arrested in the raid.

In separate operations the following day, David was arrested in Laoag City, while videoke bar maintainer Bermejo was nabbed in Pagudpud.



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Sick student falls off flyover

A 17-YEAR-OLD student delirious from high fever died when he reportedly leapt off the Nagtahan flyover in Sampaloc, Manila on Sunday night.

Arjay Cruz, of A. H. Lacson (formerly Governor Forbes) Street, Sampaloc, died from a cracked skull and broken limbs at the De Ocampo Memorial Medical Center.

SPO1 Diomedes Labarda of the city police's homicide section said Cruz has been suffering from influenza since Saturday and was all alone in his house Sunday night.

Cruz's neighbors told SPO1 Labarda that they were horrified to see the victim on top of the north-bound flyover connecting Lacson and Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard, near Loreto Street at about 7 p.m. *J. Aning*

Policemen can't find recruiter-rapist

A 14-YEAR-OLD girl from Quezon City got raped after her mother entrusted her to the suspect who had convinced the parent to send her own daughter, a minor, as a dancer to Japan.

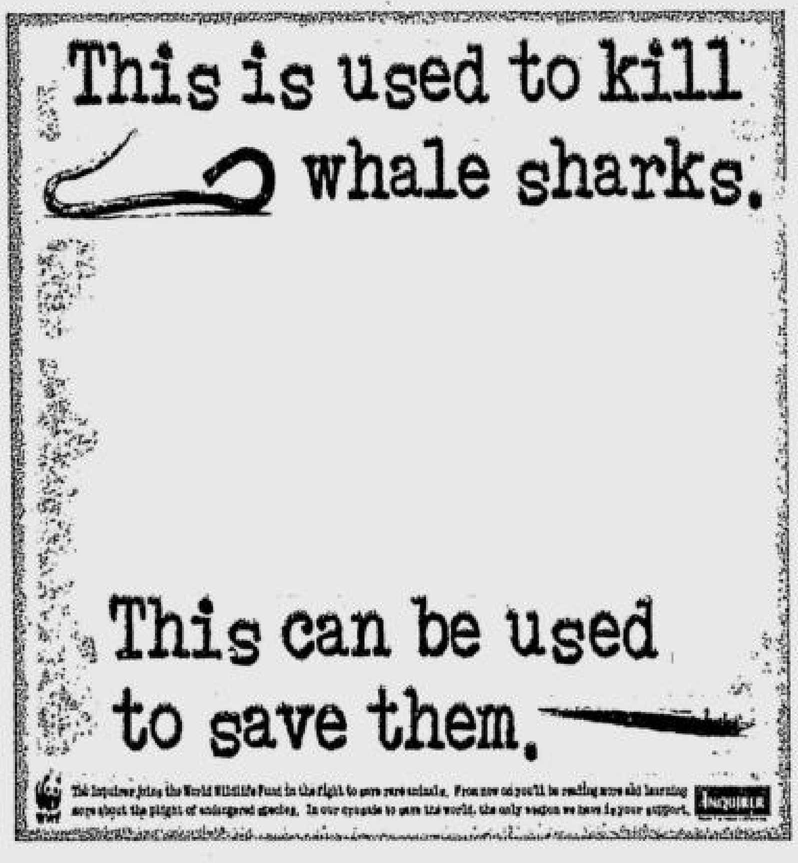
The suspect was a total stranger to the victim's mother. The mother met him for the first time only last Saturday, when the suspect suddenly appeared at her home and took away the victim.

Insp. Narcisa Salva, chief of the La Loma police station Women's and Children's Desk, told the INQUIRER that the rape took place around lunch Saturday after the suspect, who identified himself as Rey Oca, and in his 30s, went to the victim's home in Barangay Manresa, La Loma, Quezon City.

"The suspect introduced himself to the mother as a friend of her mother-in-law," Salva said in a phone interview.

"Her mother-in-law and husband were in Nueva Ecija at that time. After getting into the house, the suspect started talking about his 'promotions' business of sending dancers to Japan," she added.

Because the victim was an out-of-school youth, the jobless mother was easily convinced to turn her daughter into a Japayuki. *P. Tubeza*



This is used to kill whale sharks.
This can be used to save them.
INQUIRER

Love angle eyed... (From page A17)

Meanwhile, an Indian money-lender was killed Sunday night after three unidentified men shot him at the Parola Compound, also in Tondo, around 9:30 p.m.

Darshan Lai, 65, a resident of 2511 Galvez Compound, Pasay City, died eight hours after undergoing an operation at the Gat Andres Bonifacio Memorial Medical Center.

SPO2 Rodolfo Rival Jr. said the victim was about to leave Area D in Parola after collecting payments from several clients.

The gunmen shot at the victim twice and grabbed the bag of the victim which contained the collection. *Jerome Aning*

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (PARTNERSHIP)—Partnership as a juridical personality—To be considered a juridical personality, a partnership must fulfill these requisites: (1) two or more persons bind themselves to contribute money, property or industry to a common fund; and (2) intention on the part of the partners to divide the profits among themselves. It may be constituted in any form; a public instrument is necessary only where immovable property of real rights are contributed thereto. This implies that since a contract of partnership is consensual, an oral contract of partnership is as good as a written one. Where no immovable property or real rights are involved, what matters is that the parties have complied with the requisites of a partnership. The fact that there appears to be no record in the Securities and Exchange Commission of a public instrument embodying the partnership agreement pursuant to Article 1772 of the Civil Code did not cause the nullification of the partnership. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, First Division, Tocao v. Court of Appeals, G.R. No. 127405, October 4, 2000]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 6, 2001
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading: Is 55:10-11
Gospel: Mt 6:7-15

Jesus said to his disciples, "When you pray, do not use a lot of words, as the pagans do, for they hold that the more they say, the more chance they have of being heard. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need, even before you ask him.

This, then, is how you should pray:
Our Father in heaven, holy be your name, your kingdom come
and your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today the kind of bread we need.
Forgive us our debts just as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.
Do not bring us to the test but deliver us from the evil one.

If you forgive others their wrongs, your Father in heaven will also forgive yours. If you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive you either."

Commentary

Prayer has been one of the basic acts of Jewish piety, which we Christians have inherited from Judaism. But true prayer can only begin as an activity when we realize who God is for us and who we are to him. In other words, prayer begins when we experience God to be a living Father/Mother to us, to whom we entrust ourselves and all our affairs and concerns. Let this day be a deepening of this God-experience. And so, we can truly pray.

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7	DOLBY SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
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6	DOLBY SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
7	DOLBY DIGITAL	HANNIBAL
8	DOLBY SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP
9	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
10	DOLBY SURROUND	CAST AWAY
11	DOLBY SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
12	DOLBY SURROUND	TUHOG

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1	DOLBY DIGITAL	WOMAN ON TOP
2	DOLBY DIGITAL	CAST AWAY
3	DOLBY SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
4	DOLBY SURROUND	HANNIBAL
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	PAY IT FORWARD
6	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HANNIBAL
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8	DOLBY SURROUND	TUHOG
9	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
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11	DOLBY SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
12	DOLBY SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME

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3	DOLBY DIGITAL	HOSTAGE
4	DTS	HANNIBAL
5	DOLBY SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP
6	DOLBY SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
9	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
10	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
12	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452

1	DOLBY SURROUND	BLONDIE
2	DOLBY SURROUND	TUHOG
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
4	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE
5	DOLBY SURROUND	CAST AWAY
6	DOLBY SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
7	DTS	HANNIBAL
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	HANNIBAL
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP
10	DOLBY SURROUND	FAMILY MAN
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	PAY IT FORWARD
12	DOLBY SURROUND	DEMON GATE

SM SOUTHMALL 8066888 • 8066762

1	ULTRA SURROUND	CAST AWAY
2	ULTRA SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
3	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HANNIBAL
4	ULTRA SURROUND	HOSTAGE
5	ULTRA SURROUND	BLONDIE
6	ULTRA SURROUND	DEMON GATE
7	ULTRA SURROUND	HOSTAGE
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HANNIBAL
9	ULTRA SURROUND	TUHOG
10	ULTRA SURROUND	OBJECT OF OBSESSION

TUTUBAN CENTER 2514302

1	ULTRA SURROUND	HANNIBAL
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	HOSTAGE
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BLONDIE

SM CEBU 2313876

1	DOLBY SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
2	ULTRA SURROUND	HANNIBAL
3	ULTRA SURROUND	WOMAN ON TOP
4	ULTRA SURROUND	TUHOG
5	ULTRA SURROUND	HOSTAGE
6	ULTRA SURROUND	CAST AWAY
7	DOLBY SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	ULTRA SURROUND	102 DALMATIANS
2	ULTRA SURROUND	PROOF OF LIFE
3	ULTRA SURROUND	VITAL PARTS
4	ULTRA SURROUND	VIRGIN WIFE
5	ULTRA SURROUND	HOSTAGE
6	ULTRA SURROUND	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
7	ULTRA SURROUND	CAST AWAY
8	ULTRA SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT

SM PAMPANGA 7128016

1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	HANNIBAL
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CAST AWAY
3	DOLBY SURROUND	DEMON GATE
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TUHOG
5	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TUSONG TWOSOME
6	DOLBY SURROUND	HOSTAGE

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GLORIETTA 1 formerly QUAD

1 HOSTAGE
2 HANNIBAL
3 102 DALMATIANS
4 OBJECT OF OBSESSION

All Digital Sound

GLORIETTA 4

1 CAST AWAY In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2 WOMAN ON TOP In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3 HANNIBAL THX In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4 TIGERLAND (Phil. Premiere) In DTS DIGITAL SOUND Art Film
5 PAY IT FORWARD In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6 HANNIBAL In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7 FAMILY MAN In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

1 HANNIBAL In DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
2 HANNIBAL In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3 PAY IT FORWARD In DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
4 SOON TO OPEN Onstage

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1 HANNIBAL THX In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2 PAY IT FORWARD In DSD DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3 CAST AWAY In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4 WOMAN ON TOP In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5 HOSTAGE In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) WOMAN ON TOP
2 (SDDS) HANNIBAL
3 (DTS) CAST AWAY
4 GOLD (DTS) HANNIBAL
5 GOLD (DOLBY) SPLENDOR
6 GOLD (SDDS) FAMILY MAN
7 GOLD (DOLBY) VERTICAL LIMIT
8 102 DALMATIANS
9 HOSTAGE
10 TUSONG TWOSOME

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 (DTS) HOSTAGE
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 (DTS) PAY IT FORWARD
Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMAX 1-2 & 3
(Kalaw) tel 536.4315
1 (DOLBY) HANNIBAL
2 (DTS) RESERVE
3 HOSTAGE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603
1 HOSTAGE
2 HANNIBAL
3 BLONDIE

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986
1 HOSTAGE
2 TUSONG TWOSOME
3 TUHOG
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL) HANNIBAL
5 BLONDIE

Metropolis
(Alabang) tel 543.4001
1 OBJECT OF OBSESSION
2 TUHOG
3 HOSTAGE
4 TUSONG TWOSOME
5 RESERVE
6 HANNIBAL
7 BLONDIE
8

Uniwide Metromall
(Las Piñas) tel. 873.5606 loc. 1074
WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR ONLY P30 00
1
2 KANGKONG
3 READY TO RUMBLE
4 GOSSIP
5 –
6

Uniwide Coastal Mall
(Parañaque) tel 879.0001 loc. 2152
1 WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR ONLY P30 00
2 NAKED LIES
3 ARAYY
4 RD PLANET

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 TABI TABI PO
2 PROOF OF LIFE

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515
1 RESERVE
2 BLONDIE
3 HOSTAGE

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864
1 HOSTAGE
A TURN ON

JC Cinema
(Parañaque) tel 825.8626
1 HOSTAGE
3

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8584
1 (DOLBY) HOSTAGE
2 TUHOG
3 DEMON GATE
4 OBJECT OF OBSESSION
5 TUSONG TWOSOME
6 BLONDIE
7 (DTS) HANNIBAL
8 (SDDS) CAST AWAY
9 (DOLBY) WOMAN ON TOP

Caloocan
tel 362.3508
2 BLONDIE
3 HANNIBAL
4 HOSTAGE
5
6

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 HOSTAGE
2 TUSONG TWOSOME
3 HOSTAGE
4 (SDDS) TUHOG
5 OBJECT OF OBSESSION
6 (DOLBY) BLONDIE
7 (DTS) HANNIBAL
8 RESERVE
9 RESERVE

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083
1 (DTS) HANNIBAL
2 TUSONG TWOSOME
3 HOSTAGE
4 BLONDIE
5 (SDDS) HOSTAGE
6 TUHOG
7 (DOLBY) RESERVE
8 OBJECT OF OBSESSION

Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 OBJECT OF OBSESSION
2 RESERVE
3 (DTS) HOSTAGE
4 TUHOG
5 (SDDS) HANNIBAL
6 (DOLBY) HOSTAGE
7 (DOLBY) TUSONG TWOSOME

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 HOSTAGE

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888
1 HOSTAGE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson TUHOG
Lords BLONDIE
Jennet HOSTAGE

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 HANNIBAL
2 HOSTAGE
3 TUSONG TWOSOME
4 TUHOG

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215
1
3 HOSTAGE

Super Cinerama
(Manila) tel 733.4226 or 733.4238
1 HOSTAGE
2 TUHOG
3 BLONDIE
4 HANNIBAL
5 TUSONG TWOSOME

Divisoria Mall
(Manila) tel 244.4560 or 244.4619
1 HOSTAGE
2 BLONDIE
3 TUHOG
4 TUSONG TWOSOME
5 CROCODILE
6 SELOSA

Baclaran LRT Cinema
tel 512.0115 or 512.0116
1 HOSTAGE
2 HANNIBAL
3 BLONDIE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198
1 TUSONG TWOSOME
2 HOSTAGE
3 (DTS) HANNIBAL

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 HOSTAGE
2 (DTS) PAY IT FORWARD
3 (DOLBY) HANNIBAL
4 DEMON GATE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) HANNIBAL
2 BLONDIE
3 TUHOG
4 (DTS) HOSTAGE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) HANNIBAL
2 HOSTAGE
3 (DTS) PAY IT FORWARD
4 TUSONG TWOSOME
5 DEMON GATE

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 HANNIBAL
2 HOSTAGE
3 PAY IT FORWARD

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 536.5101
1 HANNIBAL
2 HOSTAGE
3 SNATCH

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311
1 TUSONG TWOSOME
2 HOSTAGE
3 TUHOG

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736
1 HANNIBAL
2 HOSTAGE
3 FAMILY MAN

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 HOSTAGE
2 TUHOG
3 BLONDIE
4 TUSONG TWOSOME

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 243.2783
1 (DTS) HOSTAGE
2 (DTS) TUSONG TWOSOME

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385
1 HOSTAGE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 TUSONG TWOSOME
2 HOSTAGE
3 TUHOG

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 CAST AWAY
2 TUSONG TWOSOME
3 TUHOG
4 HOSTAGE

Berma
tel 879.2168
1
2

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269
1 TUSONG TWOSOME
2 BLONDIE
3 HOSTAGE
4 HANNIBAL

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) HANNIBAL
2 TUSONG TWOSOME
3 HOSTAGE
4 (DTS EX) PAY IT FORWARD

*Movie[illegible]ct to change without prior notice

THX DOLBY dts SDDS

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❶ HANNIBAL
❷ CAST AWAY
❸ BLONDIE / TUSONG TWOSOME
❹ WOMAN ON TOP
❺ HOSTAGE
❻ OBJECT OF OBSESSION
❼ HANNIBAL

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❶ HANNIBAL
❷ TUHOG
❸ TUSONG TWOSOME
❹ CAST AWAY
❺ BLONDIE
❻ HOSTAGE

BACOLOD (034)441-0453

❶ 102 DALMATIANS
❷ PROOF OF LIFE
❸ VITAL PARTS
❹ BOUNCE
❺ CAST AWAY
❻ IKA - 7 GLORYA

DOLBY dts SDDS

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	TUSONG TWOSOME
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	HOSTAGE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	CAST AWAY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HANNIBAL
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	PAY IT FORWARD
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	TUHOG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	SNATCH
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	HANNIBAL
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	BLONDIE
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
MIRAMAR	GATAS / MY PRIVATE TEACHER
ODEON	HANNIBAL
ODEON-2	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
ROBEN	HOSTAGE
TANDEM-1	SA IYONG MGA HAPLOS
TANDEM-2	IKA - 7 GLORYA
TIMES	BLAIRWITCH 2 / GOSSIP
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	ANAK NG YAKUSA
ACT-2	ANAK NG KANO
ACT-3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
ACT-4	TURN ON
CORONET-2	BLONDIE
QUEZON-1	HANIBAL
REMAR	HOSTAGE
REMAR-2	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	TUHOG
OCEAN CINEMA-A	BOYFRIEND KONG PARI
OCEAN CINEMA-B	KATAYAN
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-2	THE CASTLE OF SAND
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	HOSTAGE
CINEMA-2	DEMON GATE
CINEMA-3	BLONDIE
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	102 DALMATIANS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-6	HOSTAGE
CINEMA-7	VIRGIN WIFE
CINEMA-8	TUHOG
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CAST AWAY
CINEMA-12	OBJECT OF OBSESSION
CINEMA-14	HOSTAGE
CINEMA-15	TUSONG TWOSOME
LORES	
CINEMA-2	HOSTAGE
CINEMA-3	TUHOG
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	HIGH FIDELITY
CINEMA-2	HANNIBAL
CINEMA-3	PAY IT FORWARD
CINEMA-4	FAMILY MAN
CINEMA-5	CAST AWAY
CINEMA-6	HANNIBAL

FEEL groovy and funky as ABC 5 launches one of the world's well-loved period comedy series, "That '70s Show," 9 p.m. tonight.

Set in the era of Led Zeppelin 8-tracks, Tab colas, Pong, Disco and Farrah Fawcett posters, "That '70s Show" is a nostalgic and funny flashback to the most interesting decade and features a young, breakout cast that has been featured on Teen People's "Hottest 21 under 21" list.

The show is set in suburban Wisconsin and its soul is the Forman house where Eric (Topher Grace) lives with his ultra-conservative dad Red (Kurtwood Smith), high-strung mom Kitty (Debra Jo Rupp) and college drop-out sister Laurie (Lisa Robin Kelly).

Eric gets by mostly with a little help from his friends—serious and cool Hyde (Danny Masterson), intellectually challenged Kelso (Ashton Kutcher), his domineering ex-girlfriend Jackie (Mila Kunis) and exchange student Fez (Wilmer Valderrama).

Eric's best friend is next-door neighbor Donna (Laura Prepon), whose parents Bob (Don Stark) and Midge (Tanya Roberts) are very deep into every '70s fad and fashion.

"That '70s Show" is hip, fast-faced and loaded with all the right tunes for the times.

'Saklolo Abogado' on IBC

"SAKLOLO Abogado" will now be viewed every Tuesday on IBC 13, 6:30 to 7 p.m.

Unfazed by competition from rival stations, "Saklolo Abogado" aims to equal if not surpass its performance at its former host station ABC 5.

Program hosts and producers, lawyers Rita Linda Ventura Jimeno and Antonio C. Cope of Jimeno Jalandoni and Cope law Officers, hope this bold move will bring the show closer to people.

"Saklolo Abogado" has a new segment, "Tanong ng Masa," where a roving reporter gives ordinary people a chance to pose legal questions, to be answered by the hosts.

The program enjoys the full support of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, now under the leadership of Maria Livia Singson de Leon.

"Saklolo Abogado" is under the direction of Lito Beltran of Blossom Productions.

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Bloody but unbowed

IT'S been more than a year (after "Muro-Ami") since **Cesar Montano** has had a new movie up on our movie screens, so his fans are giving his latest starrer, "Hostage," a warm reception.

In the action-drama, Montano plays an army man whose only daughter is killed in an ambush ordered by a corrupt congressman (**Roi Vinzon**). As fate would have it, Montano gets his chance to get back at his daughter's killer when the congressman's own child (**Moreen Guese**) falls into his hands.

His natural impulse, of course, is to avenge himself on the little girl, but he checks himself and refuses to be as bloodthirsty as his nemesis. Instead, he surprises himself by developing a caring if not loving relationship with his young hostage.

A subplot involves his friend and sidekick, a cop who's been suspended, played by comedian **Bayani Agbayani**, and Bayani's sister, a teacher, portrayed by **Kristine Hermosa**.

At first, Kristine dislikes Montano like the dickens because she thinks he's a kidnapper, but once she discovers his true nature, she helps her brother keep Montano out of harm's way.

Of course, the evil congressman is too crafty to be foiled by two small-time do-gooders like them, so, when push comes to shove, it's still Montano who has to get his friends out of the tight spot they find themselves in.

The film's finale is a visually striking series of sequences set in a huge ice plant where scores huge blocks of ice have been primed to explode at any wrong move on Montano's part.

But, when the smoke and icy mist clear up, it's still our hero who strides out of the ice plant, bloody but unbowed.

What about Kristine? Well, she's forgotten for the moment as Montano shares the final freeze-frame with his former hostage, who has now taken the place of his dear, departed daughter in his heart of hearts.

The film works well when Montano and Agbayani have their sassy, comic-relief scenes together. Unfortunately, the scenes between Montano and Moreen Guese don't come off as effectively because the new child star is a bit too determinedly pert and glib to be truly endearing.

As for Kristine Hermosa, she's a lovely and promising leading lady, but is not really given much to do in this movie. And Roi Vinzon makes a fearsome villain, but only in the standard mode for action capers of this kind.

TV treats

TODAY, March 6, at 4:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. on Star Movies, "Bonnie and Clyde: The True Story" presents a new dramatic perspective on two of America's most legendary criminals.

Based on the accounts of relatives and others who knew them, this is the story of their roots, their early romance and their relationships with their parents. Starring **Tracey Needham, Dana Ashbrook, Doug Savant** and **Billy Morrissette**. (Replay on March 16 at 10 a.m.).

At 9 p.m. on Star Movies, "There Goes My Baby" is a drama about the lives of eight high school seniors during the turbulent '60s. The group includes a Harvard-bound student, the quintessential beach boy faced with the horror of trading in his surfboard for a machine gun in vietnam, and a girl who dreams of rock 'n' roll stardom.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Stars include **Rick Schroeder, Noah Wyle, Kristin Minter, Dermot Mulroney** and **Kelli Williams** (Replay at 10:45 p.m. on March 11.)

At 9 p.m. on Star Movies, "Counter Force" stars **Robert Patrick** and **Michael Rooker**. In the film, the most powerful criminal organization in a big city, untouchable by the law, is being destroyed with surgical precision. The FBI and the local police track down a group of vigilantes that turns out to be a renegade SWAT team from the police force whose members have appointed themselves as the criminals' executioners.

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HIGH FIDELITY - P 13 12:00, 2:25, 4:50, 7:15, 9:40	HANNIBAL - R 18 12:40, 3:20, 6:20, 9:00	PAY IT FORWARD - P 13 11:40, 2:15, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50
THE FAMILY MAN - P 13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	CAST AWAY - P 13 1:05, 3:50, 6:35, 9:20	HANNIBAL - R 18 1:40, 4:20, 7:20, 10:00

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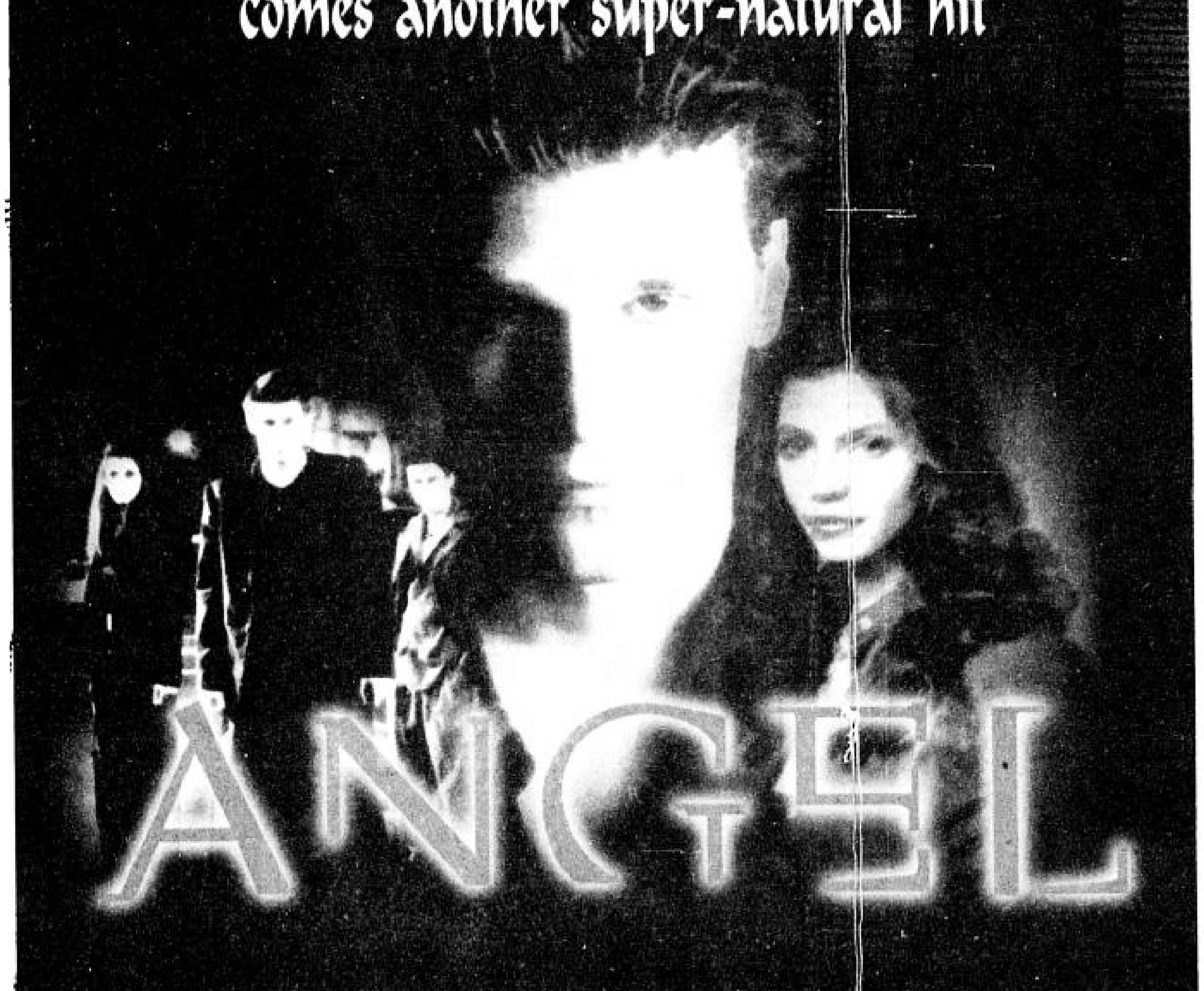
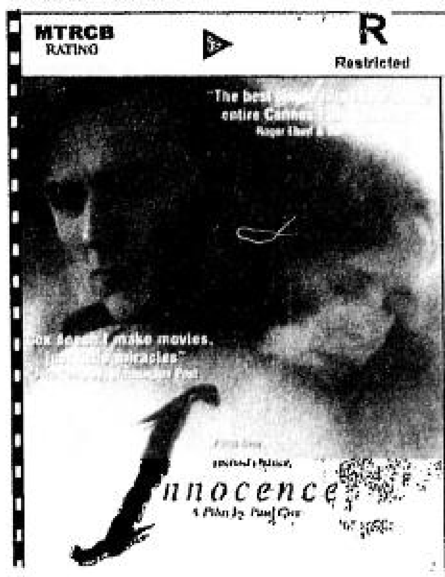


From the creator of Buffy the Vampire Slayer
comes another super-natural hit
ANGEL
Combining sizzling adventure and dark humor, this highly popular spin-off tells the story of a vampire searching for redemption by saving lost souls.
A vampire cursed with a conscience, Angel left the small town of Sunnydale and the only woman he ever loved to take up residence in Los Angeles. The "City of Angels" will truly be the perfect place for a fallen vampire looking to save a few lost souls and, in turn, perhaps redeem his own.
Starring David Boreanaz, L Charisma Carpenter, Glenn Quinn
STUDIO 23
Premieres tonight at 8:30pm on 23



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TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2001
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
B1
BUSINESS
RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ■ CORRIE S. NARISMA, Assistant Editor

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Singapore offers to develop Subic, Clark

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE MACAPAGAL administration is seriously considering an offer by Temasek Holdings, the Singapore government's investment holding arm, to form a multibillion-dollar joint venture to develop the Subic and Clark sea and airports into a major logistics hub and transshipment point in the region.

The offer of Temasek, which is more popularly known as Singapore Inc., was made through former Clark Development Corp. chair Rufo Colayco who dubbed the proposed venture as "a signature project that can quickly transform the perception of the Philippines as a whole."

In a letter to Trade Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II, Colayco said Temasek was keen on developing and managing jointly with the Philippine government the former air and naval bases; the highway network that would link the two special economic zones, and a land bank to create industrial and service centers with residential components.

Colayco said preliminary discussions with both government officials as well as private sector executives in Singapore and Japan indicated a high level of interest in the concept.

Under the project plan, Subic would replace the Manila port as the country's main gateway. Colayco noted that at present, goods coming in from the United States and Europe have to be flown in through Singapore, Hong Kong and Taipei.

Colayco said: "Subic is a natural deepwater port which can readily be equipped to be a top-class container port not only to handle goods destined for the Philippines, but also for transshipment to regional destinations."

Colayco said: "The demand for break-bulk cum consolidation services at strategically located airports will grow literally by leaps and bounds. Clark is ideally situated to become a regional logistics center of the sort that has emerged in places like Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan."

Colayco said the development of a Clark-Subic corridor, through the proposed Subic-Clark Expressway, could be a catalyst to tap the potential of the great central plain of Luzon.

"There is a golden opportunity to create an efficient agro-industrial-logistical complex immediately North of Metro Manila. The flat lands of Region 3 have long been known to be the finest agricultural lands in the country, but have been grossly underutilized during the last few decades. With irrigation and flood control, these lands could produce perhaps as much as 10 times food that they do at present," Colayco said.

Colayco said Temasek has the capacity to implement the project, having undertaken similar ventures in China and India, while the Philippines could tap more funding than it has been getting from the Japan Bank for Industrial Cooperation to build roads, irrigation and flood control.

Temasek was formed in 1974 by the Singapore government to hold and manage all its investments both locally and overseas under one roof. Its total assets are pegged at S$70 billion and it accounts for 27 percent of the total market capitalization of the Stock Exchange of Singapore. Its investments include DBS Bank, Keppel Corp., Neptune Orient Lines, Singapore Airlines, Singapore MRT, Singapore Power, and Singapore Telecommunications.

Inflation eases; Bangko Sentral poises rate cut

By Doris C. Dumlao and Clarissa S. Batino

CONSUMER prices rose 6.7 percent from a year earlier in February after hitting a 21-month high the previous month, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

Annual inflation in Metro Manila fell to 7.7 from 7.8 percent while inflation outside the metropolis eased to 6.3 from 6.5 percent.

It said favorable weather caused food prices to soften.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the February figure was at the "lower end of the range" of the government's target.

He said the January surge was caused by the volatile exchange rate and high interest rates in December, amid a corruption scandal that subsequently toppled disgraced leader Joseph Estrada, along with rising oil prices.

Analysts said food prices inside and outside Metro Manila fell due to the slowdown in crude prices, normalized demand after the Christmas consumer spending sprees, and the elimination of supply bottlenecks linked to the previous political uncertainties as well as the typhoons last October and November.

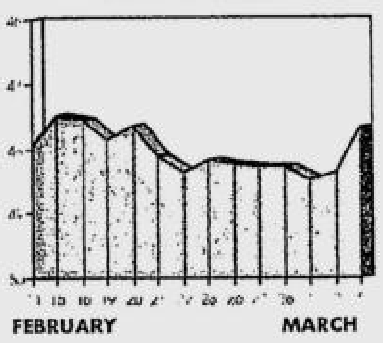
Monetary authorities are now looking at another half-percentage point cut in interest rates on Thursday, weeks ahead of a planned interest rate reduction by the US Federal Reserve.

"The inflation numbers are a pleasant surprise. This would open discussions on Thursday whether we could pre-empt the US Fed or keep rates steady," Buenaventura said.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY ROBERT B. ANDRES

Peso-Dollar Rate

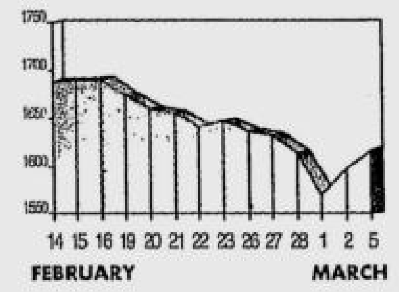
₱47.67 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 5, 2001

¥119.02 = $1
The US dollar was trading at 119.02 as of 5 p.m., March 5, 2001

GOLD:$261.80/262.30
per ounce Hong Kong, March 5, 2001

STOCK MARKET

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares end higher

SHARES closed higher yesterday as investors welcomed the Supreme Court ruling last Friday affirming the legitimacy of the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Also aiding market sentiment was the favorable February inflation report released shortly before the market opened, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index managed to breach its 1600-point resistance to end up 19.57 points, or 1.2 percent, at 1616.54, adding to Friday's 1.7 percent gain. *AP*

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Bert's certificate

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THIS year, the cute administration of Gloriaetta wants to cut government spending drastically. This is easy to explain. Even if public officials are bright, which I know is an oxymoron, the government cannot spend the money which it simply does not have.

Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo tells me that the government's finances are so bad, he must sell some government assets soon, and while he is resting, he must work on the securitization of some of the government's future earnings.

For the sake of some broadcasters running for public office, Bert Romulo is only saying that he may even be forced to spend the money which the government does not have. He intends to sell certificates to the public, using future earnings as back-up.

For instance, he can use the future earnings of Pagcor as securities to be sold to the public. Every year, anyway, the gambling monopoly remits billions of pesos to the so-called presidential social fund.

That is a cute term which simply means we don't know what the hell really happens to the money. Under the plan, the future earnings of Pagcor can already be sold today as "Bert's certificate." I know, I'm hopeless.

***

STILL, the administration must prune the 2001 budget to the bones. For instance, the government will not give its employees any raise soon. It will also not allow any luxury for public officials.

All their expensive service cars are up for sale. Just who has the money to buy them, except probably some public officials themselves, or their wives and children, is a different story altogether.

Not only that, I heard that, from now on public officials may only take "important" trips abroad. Meaning, only those trips which are a matter of life and death for the country, such as emergency shopping trips to Hong Kong.

But I'm sure you notice how cutting the budget is becoming a yearly affair. This is so because our government must make a big show out of cutting the budget for the sake of foreign investors.

Cutting the budget shows foreign investors that our government has this thing called "discipline." So the budget is too big, and the money of the government is too little. No problem. Look, the government is willing to cut its own throat. Este, budget!

***

IN real life, anyway, cutting the budget is not as hard as it looks. Usually our government cuts the budget across tile board. So far, the order is for a 10-percent cut in everything. This, in our language down here, is simply part of the usual dagdag-bawas.

All government outfits pad their budgets. This is the *dagdag* part. As part of its long tradition, as I said, the government must show everybody it has discipline. Enter the *bawas* part. By tradition, the government must always cut the budget of each government agency every year. I just don't know who they are trying to fool.

But between us girls, I also heard this cute administration is bailing out some government firms in their deals with private firms. Well, it's an election year, and sample ballots are all over the place. So what do you call that—sample bailout?

Based on official estimates, the "bailout" can amount to P9 billion this year. Easily, the money will pay for the liabilities of government firms which were guaranteed by the national government.

Thus, frankly, I think Romulo is a very lucky man. He must now take care of those liabilities which the government incurred way before his time. Among them were the multibillion-peso deals of our beloved state monopoly Napocor.

***

THOSE were deals for Napocor to buy electricity from private firms, no matter if there would already be an oversupply enough to fry all the corrupt public officials on the electric chair, and I tell you, they are a lot.

The biggest of them took place during the time of Kuya Eddie. Another big deal of the government which Bert Romulo must now worry about, was the Metrorail on Edsa. Surprisingly, it also took place during the time of Kuya Eddie.

Fortunately for Romulo, he has this easy job to raise money which others in the government have the hard job of spending. Thus, aside from using even Pagcor's future earnings, Romulo is trying to sell other government assets outright Garage sale, *ba!*

You see, he is hoping to raise P17 billion through privatization. He wants to sell shares of the publicly listed Meralco, for instance. Whether he likes it or not, if the market doesn't improve, Romulo cannot even sell government puto.

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WHICH is why Romulo tells me he wants to call stockbrokers to a meeting. Which I tell him is timely. Like the whole country, the Philippine Stock Exchange is holding an election. It is electing its new set of governors from among its members.

Perhaps it's an indication of excitement in the market, but whatever it is, this year there are two tickets in the PSE election. Brokers are actually going to have a choice. Last year, a "unified" ticket was forced Upon them. Meaning, no election, dummy!

The "challengers" are headed by Harry Liu, a former PSE chair himself, together with Ping Francisco, Eduard Sy, Paul Soo, Joey Roxas, Omar Cruz, and Eric Lim. Notice one thing: They have no other business other than stock brokerage.

As a campaign, er, "promise," they promise to work hard for reforms. For one, they want to hold longer meetings than those of the present board, which are one-hour twice-a-month things.

Here's a tip to Romulo: Perhaps he can want to call for the meeting with stockbrokers, until after the PSE elections on Saturday. It's nothing personal. It's just a little politics.

HK investment firm buys stake in Fairmont

By Doris C. Dumlao

FAIRMONT Holdings Inc. has obtained P350 million in fresh equity infusion from global investment company Emerging Market Assets Ltd. of Hong Kong.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Fairmont said it executed a subscription agreement with Emerging Market Assets for the issuance of 350 million common shares by way of private placement.

The shares were sold at P1 per share.

This will enable Emerging Markets to acquire 17.5 percent of the 2 billion total shares issued by Fairmont while Megaworld's stake will be diluted from 72.72 to 60 percent.

Analysts yesterday said the additional equity from the Hong Kong-based company indicated that the scandal-ridden company could find some salvation in property magnate Andrew Tan, who recently took over its management from Estrada crony Dante Tan.

Fairmont, formerly BW Resources Corp., was involved in a stock market scandal last year over price manipulation charges.

"Fairmont needs to raise funds through private placements to enable the company to address its immediate cash requirements and various obligations," newly installed Fairmont president Ferdinand Masi said.

Ayalas' ₱1-B project gets pioneer perks

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BOARD of Investments has granted pioneer incentives to Ayala Corp.'s P1.07-billion Internet data center (IDC) project which will propel the country's oldest business to the field of electronic commerce (e-commerce).

Ayala's project is one of the 12 information technology projects worth P5 billion approved by the BOI in the first two months this year.

Ayala, through Ayalaport Makati Inc., is expected to generate P3.442 billion in total earnings over the next five years by offering IDCs which are state-of-the art, secure buildings that will host, co-locate and manage computer servers and applications for their clients' Internet and multimedia operations.

These services are aimed at companies that opt to keep their hardware solutions and website management in-house without having to worry about the maintenance and storage of their equipment.

Ayala's rival, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s is also investing P850 million in an IDC project which was also granted pioneer incentives (e.g. 6-year income tax holiday) by the BOI.

Under BOI rules, information technology projects are eligible for pioneer incentives as long as they would use new technology and invest more than P100 million.

IT investments have surged since the BOI started granting incentives to domestic-oriented companies in November last year.

Other IT projects approved by the BOI on the first two months were Philweb.com Inc. 's P2.27-billion Internet project; Source Pilipinas.com's P447.863-million e-marketplace project; Aneco Comm Corp.'s P316-million international call center; Vinta Systems Inc. P177.28-million software development project; Yapster E-Trade Inc.'s P220-million application services and learning solutions project;

Meridian Telekoms Inc.'s P167.4-million Internet project; Philenter.com Inc.'s P128.5-million application services; Active Business Solution's P117.7-million software development; Adroit Innovations Philippines Inc.'s P55.7-million software development; Vantage Information Services Inc.'s P52-million data conversion project, and Smartweb Philippines Inc.'s P5-million marketing presentation provider project.

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DISCLOSURES

BANK of the Philippine Islands' P0.80 per share cash dividend will be paid on April 1 in favor of shareholders of record as of March 17.

* * *

GLOBE Telecom Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 2, 2 p.m. at the Rigodon Ballroom of Hotel Peninsula Manila. Stockholders of record as of Feb. 20 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

FAIRMONT Holdings Inc. executed a subscription agreement with Hong Kong-based investment company Emerging Market Assets Limited for the issuance of 350 million shares at P1.00 per share.

* * *

PHILCOMSAT Holdings Corp. announced the election of Erlinda Ilusorio as an additional member of the company's executive committee.

* * *

REPUBLIC Glass Holdings Corp. announced the resignation of Mario Meneses Jr. as director. He will, however, continue to serve as the company's corporate secretary. Federico Puno was elected to replace Meneses in the board. Also, the company's annual stockholders' meeting will be held on March 29, 3 p.m. at the Green Hall Building in Pasig City with record date on March 8.

* * *

LEPANTO Consolidated Mining Co. produced 14,047 ounces of gold, 309,134 pounds of copper and 68,934 ounces of silver with combined value of P213.6 million. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Monday, March 5, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	105	105	105	105	2,230
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70.5	71	70	70	127,600
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	53.5	54.5	53.5	54	66,900
Global Business Bank Inc.	72	74	72	73	2,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	221	229	221	228	83,500
Philippine National Bank	45	49	45	49	829,400
Security Bank Corp.	24	24	24	24	1,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	25	26	25	26	31,100
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	350,000
Filipino Fund Inc	0.39	0.42	0.39	0.39	240,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1280	1285	1280	1285	3,640
Sun Life Financial Serv.	990	990	985	985	1,980
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	47	47	47	47	600
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.66	0.67	0.63	0.63	6,560,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	725	725	725	725	20
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.0575	0.055	0.055	5,700,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	12,000
Piltel	0.66	0.67	0.66	0.66	3,250,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	810	810	800	805	168,720
Ivantage Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.02	1.02	1,050,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.0675	0.07	240,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	54	54.5	53.5	53.5	24,000
Manila Electric Co. B	63	64	63	63	833,400
Petron Corp.	1.88	1.92	1.86	1.88	7,119,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	90,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	40,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.3	1.34	1.26	1.26	12,270,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.51	0.55	1,530,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	2	2	2	2	20,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	50,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	44,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	120,700
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	37.5	37.5	36.5	36.5	126,000
Pancake House Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	50,000
Pure Foods Corp. A	95	95	95	95	2,000
RFM Corp.	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.36	1,255,000
San Miguel Corp. A	49.5	49.5	48	48.5	59,700
San Miguel Corp. B	58	58	56	56	421,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.6	0.65	0.59	0.63	160,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	20,000
Ayala Corp.	7.7	7.8	7.5	7.6	4,643,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.6	1.6	1.58	1.6	2,511,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12	12.25	12	12.25	1,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.98	1	0.98	1	560,000
APC Group Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.235	0.235	1,700,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	56,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	5,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	70,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	13	13	8.6	13	2,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.15	3.15	3,542,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	150,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	500,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.16	920,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	800,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.4	1.4	2,825,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	24.25	24.25	23.5	23.5	284,900
Global Equities Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	180,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	60,000
Ionics Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	82,200
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	927,000
Macroasia Corp.	2	2	2	2	65,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.92	0.92	0.9	0.9	1,210,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.6	0.62	0.6	0.6	14,730,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.72	0.72	2,460,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.36	2,800,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.5	0.64	0.48	0.48	610,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.32	1,480,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	40,000
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	80,000
Metro Alliance Holdings-B	1	1	0.98	0.98	3,010,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	2,000
Music Corp.	3.1	3.1	2.95	3	539,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.83	0.86	0.83	0.86	670,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.13	1,430,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	7	7	7	7	200,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.9	0.91	0.9	0.91	120,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	11.75	12.5	11.75	12.25	282,200
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.62	0.62	180,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.69	0.7	0.67	0.68	9,610,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.68	4,240,000
Manila Jockey Club	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	200
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	47	47	47	47	249,100
Ayala Corp. Pref.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	1,000
Equitable PCI Bank-War	3.95	4	3.95	3.95	85,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	780	780	780	780	20
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0034	0.0034	0.0032	0.0032	108,000,000
Waterfront Phils-Warrant	0.0575	0.065	0.0575	0.065	400,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	75,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.7	6.8	6.5	6.6	6,988,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.35	400,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	150,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.33	4,810,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.43	110,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.42	3,000,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	5,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.75	2.8	7,565,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	290,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	180,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	10,000
SM Development Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	390,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7.1	9,223,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	5,850,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.0065	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	27,000,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	3,000,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	10,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	150,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	8,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	10,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	70,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.23	260,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	6,300,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	13,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	65,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	20,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.22	0.25	0.22	0.22	500,000
Pacifica	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.018	11,100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1,800,000

CURRENCIES

March, 5, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.068833	1.000000	48.4900
Japan	Yen	0.008980	0.008402	0.4074
United Kingdom	Pound	1.572788	1.471500	71.3530
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.137033	0.128208	6.2168
Switzerland	Franc	0.649588	0.607755	29.4700
Canada	Dollar	0.692249	0.647668	31.4054
Singapore	Dollar	0.611041	0.571690	27.7212
Australia	Dollar	0.564355	0.528011	25.6033
Bahrain	Dinar	2.835251	2.652661	128.6275
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.284991	0.266638	12.9293
Brunei	Dollar	0.610238	0.570939	27.6848
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000109	0.000102	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.024656	0.023068	1.1186
UAE	Dirham	0.291037	0.272294	13.2035
Korea	Won	0.000844	0.000790	0.0383
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Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.067993	3.2970
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Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000483	0.0234
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Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.023193	1.1246
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.187967	57.6045

SEC RULING

Victorias to get new chief operating officer

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has junked a move to prevent a management committee it appointed from installing a new chief operating officer in Victorias Milling Co.

The decision paves the way for the appointment of former National Development Corp. general manager Art Aguilar as Victorias' new COO. Aquilar was endorsed by the debt-laden sugar firm's creditors.

In a decision released on Wednesday, the SEC said there was an approved rehabilitation plan for Victorias Milling, and that its Nov. 29, 2000 order merely acted on an amendment to this plan.

The commission stressed that its Aug. 28, 1997 order gave Victorias Milling's management committee the authority to appoint a COO.

"A reading of the Aug. 28, 1997 order, which has long become final, shows that, together with the appointment of the management committee, the commission gave it certain powers, one of which is to undertake the management of Victorias Milling," it said.

The SEC said the management committee's authority to appoint a COO was simply a way to fulfill one of its functions, which was to operate the business of the sugar producer.

The commission also noted that there was a need for the management committee to appoint a COO because of the irrevocable resignation of Manuel Mañalac as Victorias Milling president, chief executive, director and member of the management committee effective Jan. 31 this year.

The SEC has approved an alternative rehabilitation plan for Victorias Milling. The company, however, is pressing for its own recovery plan.

The alternative plan approved by the SEC called for a restructuring of Victorias Milling's over P5 billion in debts and entry of a strategic investor, or the infusion of about P400 million from its creditors failing the emergence of a "white knight."

Lawmakers urged to hold extra sessions on energy bill

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MACAPAGAL administration has realized the importance of legislating the power sector reform bill and will push Congress to hold special sessions this month or next to get the measure signed into law.

Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo said in an interview yesterday he would recommend during a Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council meeting today that Congress hold special sessions to pass the bill.

"I would recommend to hold special sessions for the power bill. The civil society should be involved in the process," Romulo told reporters.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has scrapped discussions on this year's budget, deciding instead to pass a bill that will sell the state's debt-laden National Power Corp.

Renewed focus on power sector legislation could end four years of deliberations.

Certain quarters have warned that unless the power sector reform bill is passed, the country will face 8-hour power outages similar to the one it experienced during an energy crisis in the early '90s.

Ms Macapagal said earlier she would leave the controversial issue to the next Congress, which takes office on June 30.

The new power bill will deregulate the industry, breaking up and privatizing Napocor. Napocor lost P11.9 billion last year and owes $6.5 billion.

PNOC not keen on selling assets

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NEWLY installed Philippine National Oil Co. chair Sergio Apostol said yesterday the PNOC was not keen on privatizing its subsidiaries, and was instead offering to buy assets of the National Power Corp.

"We cannot privatize until after Napocor (has done so)," Apostol said in an interview.

The former Leyte representative explained that the privatization of the PNOC-Energy Development Corp., for instance, would have to wait until concerns over Napocor's contracts with independent power producers are settled.

The state-run power firm is set to review its contracts with independent power producers to reduce its deficit, Napocor officials said some contracts, entered into during the power crisis of the early '90s, were found to be too expensive.

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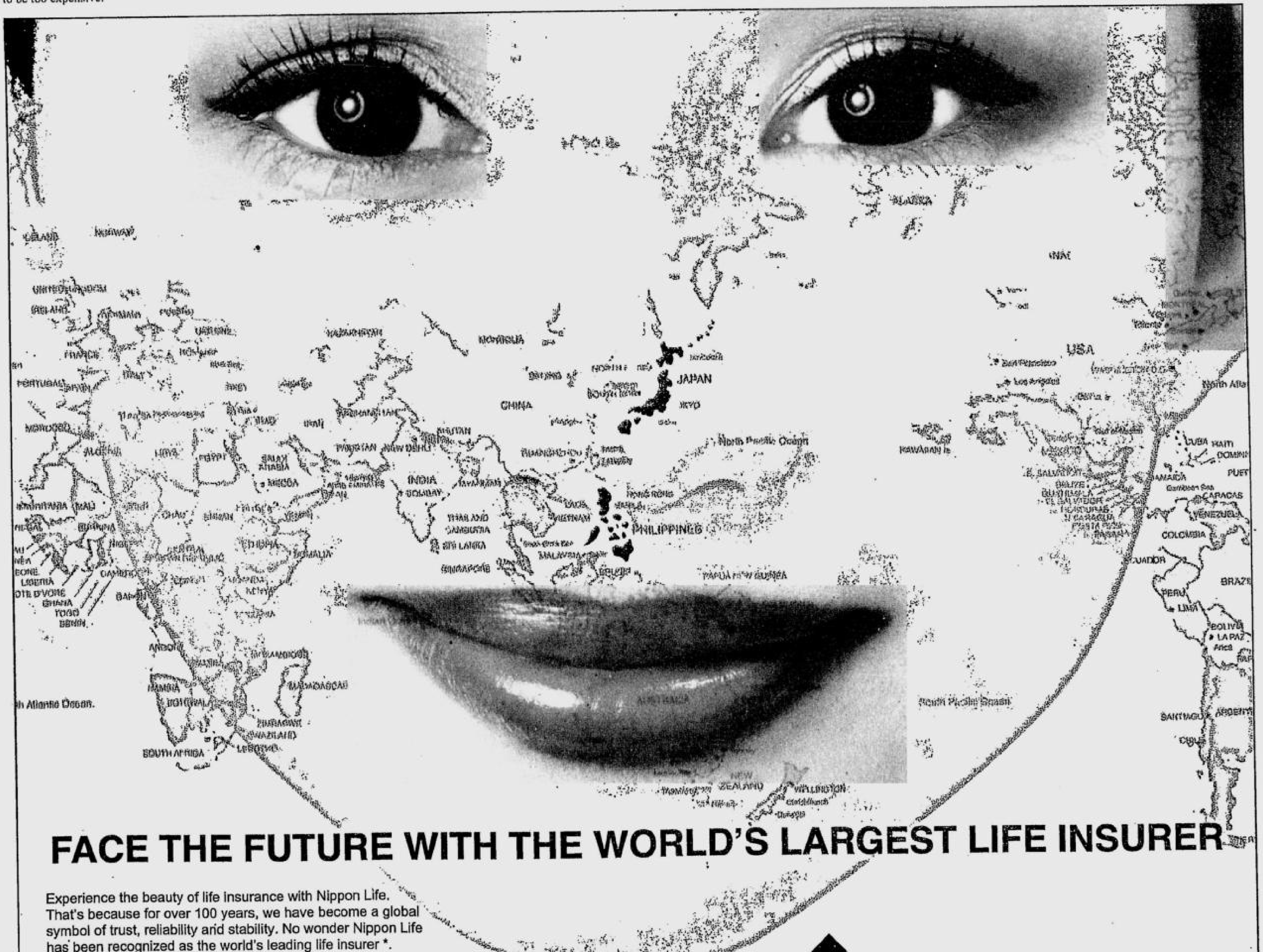

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join the family of
our beloved Chairman Emeritus

Dr. Ralph Nubla

in their bereavement

for the loss of one of the pillars

of our institution.

His remains lie in state at the Christ the King Parish Center, Green Meadows Subdivision, Pasig City.

Interment will be on March 10, 2001 (Saturday) at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 7:00 a.m. memorial Mass.

We extend our condolences to his family and loved ones and enjoin the pious readers in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

"We know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."
(Romans 8:28)

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It has been 40 days since our "dear Papa"

ENGR. BENJAMIN S. CASTILLO

of Batangas City
September 1, 1932 - January 26, 2001
peacefully left us to join his Heavenly Father.

We, loving wife **Linda** and children, brother-in-law, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces and grandchildren would like to express our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the "beautiful people of God" who in one way or another condoled with us in our hour of bereavement and to all those who continue to pray for him and keep him in their memories.

Masses and prayers are being offered for the eternal repose of his soul since February 26 to March 6, 2001 at the Parish of the Immaculate Conception, Batangas City and Parish of St. Francis de Paul—Mabini, Batangas.

Our Dearly Beloved

ENGR. JAIME Y. ROMERO

of Tuguegarao, Cagayan
Former DPWH Regional Director

Peacefully joined our Lord on March 4, 2001 at the age of 69.

His loving wife **Lourdes**; children **Noli** and **Ory**, **Mariles** and **Tony Navarro**, **Jaylou** and **Joven Hernandez**, **Isa** and **Raul Ledesma**; grandchildren **Therese** and **Abby**, **Tricia**, **Nico** and **Liaa**, **Jayvee** and **Jerome**; brother and sisters **Solon**, **Upeng**, and **Minda**; in-laws, nieces and nephews, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Chapel A and will be transported to Tuguegarao on Wednesday, March 7.

Interment will be announced later.

"Where there is love, no loved one can past for where love renders, so there is life..."

ATTY. RUFINO G. FLORES

City of San Fernando and Mexico, Pampanga

Pampanga High School Class 1956
MLQU College of Law Class 1965

was called home by the Lord on 02 March 2001 at the age of 61.

His beloved wife **Linda**; children **Rowena**, **Ronaldo**, **Roderico**, **Lamberto III** (†); father **Lamberto Sr.**; mother **Anatolia**; a loving brother to **Lamberto Jr.** and **Lydia Flores**, **Arch. Ferdinand** (†) and **Shirley Flores** and **Drs. Eduardo** and **Belen Flores**; nieces, nephews, grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at their family residence at 6th Ave., University Site Subd., City of San Fernando. Interment will be on Wednesday, March 07, 2001 at the Good Shepherd Memorial Park, City of San Fernando after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

Si "Mommy"

Caridad Castillo Pagaduan

ay ililibing na sa Garden of Memories Memorial Cemetery sa Pateros, Metro Manila, sa Miyerkules, ika-7 ng Marso, 2001, alas-2 n.h.

May misa ng alas-9 n.u. sa Loyola Memorial Chapels sa Guadalupe, Makati City, sa araw ding iyon.

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

John 14:6

In Loving Memory
of

VICTORIO BALDE ALA

On the 1st Anniversary of his rebirth to eternal life, Masses and prayers will be offered on March 7, 2001 at:

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Church *13th Ave., Cubao, Quezon City*	6:00 a.m.
Immaculate Conception Parish Church *Damar Village, Quezon City*	6:15 a.m.
Holy Sacrament Chapel *San Miguel Corp., San Miguel Avenue* *Mandaluyong City*	11:45 a.m.
Albay Cathedral *Albay, Albay*	5:30 a.m. 12:15 Noontime
St. Raphael Parish Church *Legaspi City*	5:30 p.m.

CORA and the **ALA FAMILY** extend sincerest thanks to all who continue to pray for our beloved **VIC/TORIO** and keep him in their memories.

EMMANUEL / BOYEE (†), **REY** and **MARVIE, JESSICA** and **STEPHEN.**

FEDERICO L. PAYOT, SR.

Peacefully joined his Creator on March 3, 2001
at the age of 83.

His loving wife **Josita**; children and children-in-law **Bebot** and **Sharlene**, **Joy** and **Joel**, **Rico** and **Ninfa**, **Hector** and **Nene**, **Beth**, **Damus** and **Elvie**, **Caloy** and **Isabel**; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, at 3:00 p.m., March 7, 2001 at Manila Memorial Park Sucat, Parañaque.

ALBERTO P. GARCIA, Jr.

Peacefully joined his Creator on March 2, 2001
at the age of 63.

His bereaved wife **Evangeline**; children **Alfie**, **Albert**, **Bettina**, **Arlan** and **Alfred**; sisters **Chiding**, **Carmen**, **Nick**, **Nena** and **Finita**, daughters-in-law, son-in-law, grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels.

Interment will follow at the Loyola Memorial Park Marikina on Wednesday, March 7, 2001 after the 8:30 a.m. Mass at the Love Chapel.

So Dearly Loved...
So Fondly Remembered...
So Truly Missed...

In Loving Memory of

BIENVENIDO TIU LIM

On the 1st Anniversary of his rebirth to Eternal Life—March 6, 2000

Masses will be offered on March 6, 2001 at the following Churches:

Santuario De San Antonio Parish	*Mckinley Road, Forbes Park,* *Makati City*	6:15 a.m., 7:30 a.m., 12:15 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Our Lady of Grace Parish	*De Mazenod Avenue,* *Grace Park, Caloocan City*	5:45 a.m.
Parish of the Holy Sacrifice	*UP Campus, Diliman, Quezon City*	6:00 a.m.
St. John Bosco Parish	*Arnaiz Street, Makati City*	6:30 a.m.
Baclaran Redemptorist Church	*Baclaran, Parañaque City*	6:45 a.m.
Mary the Queen Parish	*Madison Street, San Juan*	7:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel	*Equitable PCI Bank, Makati*	7:45 a.m.
St. Joseph Parish Church	*965 Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City*	12:00 nn
Sto. Niño de Paz	*Greenbelt, Makati*	12:15 p.m.
Edsa Shrine	*Edsa cor. Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City*	5:30 p.m.
Christ the King Parish	*Greenmeadows Avenue, Pasig City*	6:00 p.m.
St. Andrew the Apostles Parish	*Nicanor Garcia cor. Kalayaan Avenue,* *Makati City*	6:30 p.m.
St. Peregrine Laziosi Parish Shrine	*National Road, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City*	6:30 p.m.
Mary Queen of the Apostles Parish	*C-5 Relocation, Western Bicutan, Taguig, M.M.*	9:00 a.m.
Manila Memorial Park	*Sucat, Parañaque City*	9:00 a.m.

His family requests the pious readers, relatives and friends
to join them in prayers for his eternal repose.

"Thank you for the valleys, Lord. For this one thing I know the mountain tops are glorious but it's in the valleys I grow"

REBECCA (BECKY) GASKELL-SAYCON

Joined her Creator on March 4, 2001 at the age of 48.

Her bereaved husband **BOY**; children **JJ**, **PAOLO**, **PEPETON**; mother **LOURDES**; father **JOSE JESUS** (†); brothers and sisters **GUIA**, **JOJI** (†) and **MARIBEL** and **RENE**, **GEORGE**, **IKE** and **GABBY**; mother-in-law **LETICIA**; uncles, aunties, nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Immaculate Conception Chapel, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City. Holy Masses will be offered daily at 8:00 PM.

Cremation will be on Thursday, March 8, 2001 at the Manila Memorial Park Crematorium, Sucat Road, Parañaque after the 10:00 AM Requiem Mass at Santuario de San Antonio.

In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes your kind donations to Bethesda Springs of Hope Healing Ministry, Catholic Renewal Center, 55 Scout Santiago St. corner Scout Rallos St., Quezon City, Tel. No. 373-2384.

...I'm free
Be not burdened with times of sorrow
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow
My life's been full, I savored much
Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch...

We Lovingly Remember
the First Death Anniversary of our beloved

ERNIE "BOY" "ERNS" T. GUERRERO

who was safely back home in Heaven with his Creator on March 6, 2000.

Holy Masses will be offered at the following Churches on March 6, 2001:

Santuario De San Antonio Church, Forbes Park, Makati City	12:15 PM
Greenbelt Chapel, Makati City	5:45 PM
Naga Carmelite Monastery Chapel, Naga City	6:30 AM
Naga Metropolitan Cathedral, Naga City	7:30 AM
San Francisco Church, Naga City	12:15 PM

A Tribute to ERNIE (A Celebration of Life)
- A gathering of friends, family and loved ones of ERNIE, to remember the good times, will be held at Manila Polo Club on March 6, 2001, to be culminated with a Holy Mass.

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ATTENTION

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Republic of the Philippines
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
11th Judicial Region
Branch 10
Davao City

IN THE MATTER OF PETITION FOR
APPROVAL OF REHABILITATION
PLAN AND FOR APPOINTMENT OF
A REHABILITATION RECEIVER

SP. PROC. NO. 5773-2001

SUMERLAND INN, INC.,
represented by ABUNDIO T.
MERCED, President,
Petitioner.
x---x

STAY ORDER

The petitioner, a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the Philippines, with principal office in Davao City, filed a Petition for approval of its rehabilitation plan, attached as Annex "J", alleging in the main that it is engaged in the business of operating tourist inns, beach resorts and restaurants; that its total assets are worth P56,754,283.39 with total liabilities amounting only to P16,151,595.02; that, however, it is unable to pay its accrued and maturing obligations on account of liquidity problems brought about by the Asian financial crisis aggravated by the armed conflict in central Mindanao; that it will be able to pay all its obligations if its rehabilitation plan is approved, especially now that there are improved economic conditions under the new Administration; and prays for the issuance of an order to stay all claims against it in the meantime that the rehabilitation plan is under consideration.

Mr. Rufino Bangi, accordingly a certified public accountant, is hereby appointed as rehabilitation receiver in accordance with the Interim Rules promulgated by the Hon. Supreme Court to be followed in rehabilitation cases. He is required to post a surety bond of P500,000.00 in favor of the petitioner to guarantee the faithful performance of his function and duties as such. He is directed to signify his acceptance of this appointment within ten (10) days from receipt hereof. If he accepts, he is to take an oath before this Court in accordance with Section 15 of the Interim Rules.

The enforcement of all claims, whether for money or otherwise and whether by court action or otherwise, against the petitioner is hereby STAYED.

The petitioner is hereby prohibited from selling, encumbering, transferring or disposing in any manner any of its properties except in the ordinary course of business.

It is prohibited from making any payment of its liabilities outstanding as at the date of the filing of its Petition.

The suppliers of goods and services to the petitioner are also prohibited from withholding supplies thereof to the petitioner in the ordinary course of business as long as the latter pays for goods supplied and services rendered after the issuance of this STAY ORDER.

The petitioner is directed to pay in full all administrative liabilities to be incurred after the issuance of this STAY ORDER.

The Petition is hereby set for initial hearing on April 18, 2001, at 2:00 p.m. and, for this purpose, the petitioner is directed to publish this STAY ORDER in the Philippine Daily Inquirer once a week for two consecutive weeks, starting not later than seven (7) days from the date hereof.

All creditors and all other interested parties, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, are directed to secure from this Court copies of the Petition and its annexes as soon as possible to enable them to file their comment on or opposition to the Petition and to prepare for the initial hearing; and are hereby directed to do so with supporting affidavits and documents not later than ten (10) days before the initial hearing on April 18, 2001, otherwise they will be barred from participating in the proceedings of this case.

These are all pursuant to the provisions of Section 6 of the Interim Rules.

SO ORDERED.

Davao City, Philippines, February 27, 2001.

(Sgd.) AUGUSTO V. BREVA
Judge

Copy furnished:

Atty. Blenvenido D. Cariaga
Davao City . per.

Mr. Rufino Bangi
Corner 6th Avenue
Fortune Executive Homes
Lanang, Davao City . reg.

AVB/hdm:

(PDI -- Mar. 6 & 13, 2001)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Quezon City

NOTICE OF BIDDING

In compliance with Presidential authority for the importation of rice, the National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be holding a pre-bidding and bidding conference limited among foreign government suppliers already accredited by the NFA on March 08, 2001, 9:00 A.M. at NFA Penthouse Canteen and on **March 9, 2001** at 2:00 PM at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez, Sr. Ave., Quezon City for the supply of THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND (300,000) metric tons, 10% MOLSO, Long Grain White Rice 25% brokens, packed in 50 kg net capacity, polypropylene bag, from Vietnam, China and Thailand origin. Detailed quality specifications shall be included in the bidding terms and conditions. Shipment period is as follows:

MARCH 2001 - 25% BEST EFFORT
APRIL 2001 - AT LEAST 50% FIRM
MAY 2001 - BALANCE

Price offers must be quoted in US$/MT, C&F, Free Out basis, 1 SP, 1-2 SB, payment basis at sight L/C and 180 days usance L/C. Minimum bid offer shall be 25,000 MT. Foreign government suppliers who will source rice from their own country may be allowed to offer a maximum quantity equivalent to 150,000 MT. Foreign government suppliers who will source supply not from their country but from other countries of origin will be allowed to offer a maximum volume of only 50,000 MT, 10% MOLSO.

Sealed offers must be submitted between 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM on the bidding date.

Opening of bids will start exactly at 2:00 PM.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive any required formalities or defects found therein and may accept bid/s most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) VICENTE V. RACHO
Assistant Administrator
and Chairman, PBAC

(PDI--March 4, 5 & 6, 2001)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that estate of late **Felix R. Raqueza** has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs on Feb 22, 2001 under Doc 405 Page 81 Book III Series 2001 of Atty. Agustin G. Matavia of QC PDI-Feb27 March6&13, 2001

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given that the Dangerous Drug License Card #7285449 issued to **Dr. Juan F. Lim** was lost. If no contest received, new license will be issued.
(PDI-March 6, 2001)

JOB [illegible] ONLINE

ANNOUNCEMENT

Please be informed of our new classified advertising rates effective **February 1, 2001 issue.**

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
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Secondary mortgage market to boost housing finance

THE HOUSING and Urban Development Coordinating Council is finalizing details of the long overdue secondary mortgage market for housing for submission to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

HUDCC chair Michael Defensor said the concept was revived by President Macapagal after talks with officials of the World Bank and the International Finance Corp.

IFC executive vice president Peter Woicke and World Bank country director Vinay Bhargave recently called on President Macapagal in Malacañang to offer financial support to priority projects of the administration, including a reinvigorated housing program.

New emphasis

Defensor said that during the conference, Ms Macapagal declared that she favored putting new emphasis on the old concept of a secondary mortgage market to meet the housing backlog.

DEFENSOR

The President, however, referred to the HUDCC the task of recommending the details on how to implement the program.

Under the program followed by previous administrations, home financing was transacted through the primary mortgage market.

Under the system, the home-buyer's property is mortgaged until the loan payment is completed under a lending program managed by the National Home Mortgage and Finance Corp.

Securities

Under a secondary mortgage market, the loans can be sold or bought as securities to prospective investors backed up by the mortgage of the property itself.

Defensor expressed confidence that a secondary mortgage market will allow investment funds to flow into the housing market and ensure a more sustainable source of housing finance.

By mortgages, banks and developers can sell such mortgages to investors, allowing them to use these funds for more housing loans.

HUDCC chief Defensor said no decision was made by the President on whether the country will avail of financial assistance from the World Bank or the International Finance Corp. to support its own housing program.

However, the official from the WB and IFC specifically offered financial assistance to rehabilitate parts of Mindanao that were ravaged by the fighting between government troops and secessionist groups like the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Abu Sayyaf.

President Macapagal earlier said she did not favor the creation of a special bank to take care of the housing problem.

Megaworld Int'l eyes P1-B sales for 2001

PROPERTY-based holding firm Megaworld Corp. expects to generate sales of around P1 billion by year-end from its international marketing operations, which now span strategic markets in Asia and Australia.

Megaworld International managing director Marivic M. Acosta said the company pegged its sales projection on the highly positive market response of the Filipino communities in the overseas locations where the company has so far established its presence through representative offices.

Still growing

The company's representative offices for sales and marketing is now number seven and still growing. Plans are under way to set up additional sales and marketing posts in the Asia-Pacific region and eventually in Europe and North America.

Acosta noted that the peso-to-dollar exchange rate continues to make Philippine properties attractive to dollar-earning Filipino expatriates. Although the other Filipino property companies are likewise jumping into the international bandwagon, she stressed that Megaworld is positioned well in the market because of the range of real estate products, from high-end to middle-income, that the company and its subsidiaries can offer.

Track record

Megaworld's solid track record in project completion together with the brand identity that it has established abroad, especially among Filipinos, goes a long way in convincing many would-be customers, Acosta said.

Aside from the customers themselves, Megaworld International has also been able to ally with reputable marketing partners abroad, overseas trading companies and brokerages which handle the localized logistics requirements, such as office space, equipment and manpower, of the company.

Overseas marketing partnerships have enabled the company to quickly set up representative offices abroad. Its representative offices are located in key Japanese locations such as Tokyo, Osaka, Takarazuka and Kobe and in Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong.

March deadline set for MGS design tilt

THE DEADLINE for the submission of entries of United Architects of the Philippines' members who intend to participate in the MGS-UAP sponsored MGS Besser Paving Blocks Design Competition is March 15 this year. This was reiterated by MGS Construction president Mike Regino and MGS Products president Jing Quismundo.

Geared toward encouraging UAP members into using the durable and attractive MGS Besser Paving Blocks, the competition will tap the creativity and initiative of architects who will come up with good designs that will be made available to customers.

Entries to the competition are basically plans which are either real or hypothetical projects. The floor area must be a minimum of 50 square meters. Real projects are those projects with authentic owners and are either ongoing or future projects.

Competition participants can either be individual architects or architect partners or architectural firms. Each participant can submit as many entries. Winners are entitled to only one prize, whichever prize is higher.

The competition, which started in September 2000, will informally end on March 15. The judging will be on April 1 and the winners will be announced April 5 through registered mail and newspaper announcements.

Real estate seminars, reviews scheduled

URBAN Institute of Real estate released today the schedule of its incoming comprehensive real estate seminar (CRES) that should be taken for a complete preparation for the DTI-supervised broker's licensure examination on May 27.

The Makati venue is scheduled on March 31, April 7, 21, 28 and May 5 (five Saturdays) from 1:15 to 6:45 p.m. at the 2nd floor of Joni's Bakeshop, Arnaiz Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. For Quezon City and Marikina, the seminar will be held at the Paeng Salas Hall, Aurora Milestone Building, Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City, on March 29, April 5, 17, 19, May 3, 10 and 17 (8 days) from 5:45 to 9:15 p.m.

Interested parties may call up 681-0953 and 681-0928 or e-mail urbanet@pacific.net.ph for inquiries.

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Per DTI-NCR-Permit No. 0283 series of 2001

MAJOR LEASE AGREEMENT

One Mercedes Plaza (OMP) building administrator Carlos Alincastre and Rustan's Supermarkets AVP for marketing Beth Inting seals with a handshake the major lease agreement they earlier signed. OMP is a soon-to-open two-story commercial complex on Mercedes Avenue in Pasig City that will house a variety of retail stores, fast foods and service-oriented shops. Rustan's Express lane will be occupying 808 square meters of the mini mall and will be conveniently located at the complex's main entrance at the ground floor.

Empire East Properties opens satellite office in Cavite

AFFORDABLE housing developer Empire East Properties Inc. brings its unique brand of customer-friendly products and services to Dasmariñas, Cavite, with the opening of its first satellite sales office in the area.

The Mahogany branch office, located at the ground floor of Marta's Building on Congressional Avenue, is the first in a network of EEPI sales centers slated to open this year.

A second sales office on the Alabang-Zapote Road near the SM Southmall in Muntinlupa is set to open soon.

Strategically located in Metro Manila and nearby provinces, EEPI's network of satellite offices will serve as marketing command centers each headed by a branch sales manager. Each sales office will be a convenient venue for sales-related activities, manpower recruitment and training.

Mahogany branch sales manager Rose Laroza will lead a team of 9 sales directors. These are Elsa Casacop (Sirconian Group) Esi Gallegos (Silver Group), Maye Luna (Amber Group), Sol Tulio (Emerald Group), Gigi Dionido (Opal Group), Letty Moratal (Sapphire Group), Boysie Apolonio (Turquoise Group), Arnold Maravilla (Crysolite Group) and Nick de los Santos (Jasper Group).

EEPI president Zenaida M. Marquez led the ceremonial ribbon-cutting during the inauguration of the Dasmariñas sales office. The program included a thanksgiving Mass, blessing of the office and musical performances by the EEPI sales teams.

TRAL MAKATI D
2001

TERMITE COLONY ELIMINATION DEMO

David Ouimette, right, Sentricon-Asia regional senior scientist of Dow Agro Sciences, demonstrates to architect Leo Casicon, incoming president of UAP Makati Business BBD chapter, how Sentricon termite colony elimination system works during a recent symposium. The lecture also includes the benefits of the product, how the system is installed and a briefing of the termites' biology.

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Mr Alfred Louis Abrahamsohn (South Africa)
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"Plumbing Engineering - A Vital in Philippine Construction Technology"
Engr Ernesto I Bataol (Philippines)
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"Regional, City and Community Restorative Measures"
Prof A. Bruce Etherington (USA)
Chairman
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"An Overview of the Building and Property Management Industry in the Philippines"
Mr Valeriano S Abeng (Philippines)
Founding President
Philippine Association of Building Administrators (PABA) and the Condominium Management Association of the Philippines, Inc (CMAP)

"International Contracting - New Projects, Old Lessons"
Mr Vincent Rowan (UK)
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"Fiber Optics in Lighting Aesthetics"
Dr Manfred M. Adamer (Austria)
Marketing Manager
Crystal Architecture, D SWAROVSKI & Company

"Prefabrication, Modularity and Flexibility in Housing Design"
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Lecturer
Division of Building Science and Technology,
The City University of Hong Kong

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REAL ESTATE

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

It's a buyers' and tenants' market out there

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

STRIKE while the iron is hot, and there is no better time than now, these clichés seem truer now, particularly for the property buyers and office space tenants.

Philippine property analyst Colliers Jardine Philippines' research division said opportunities are on the rise for buyers and tenants, and it's just a matter of being "liquid" enough to buy properties or upgrade office space.

CJ suggested that for companies that could afford upgrading and costs associated with it (like fit-out and furnishing expenses), now is the time to move. Lease rates are estimated at a nearly 40-percent discount from 1997 levels. CJ describes incentives at an "all time high."

Good news

There's good news for "anchor occupiers" too, added CJ, as rent-free periods as well as fit-out periods of as much as nine months are being given to them.

CJ's research division manager Richard Raymundo told the INQUIRER that there are preselling residential units that have not increased in prices since 1997, and it's just a matter of having enough resources to purchase the property at this opportune moment.

And like what the lease rates for office space are experiencing, he said that there are indications of preselling high-end residential projects in the central business districts (CBD) offering discounts of up to 40 percent. There are also residential developments in emerging communities around the CBDs that allow a 20-percent discount.

Opportunities

The March 2001 Philippine property cycle analysis stated that opportunities for companies scouting for new office space units can also take comfort at the thought that these units are handed over with raised flooring and ceiling. CJ also disclosed that the "once ubiquitous" 10- to 15-percent annual escalation could not be enforced with a competitive property market environment. CJ added that for a typical five-year contract, escalation typically starts on the third year at a rate below 10 percent.

Although it's just a matter of time when buyers' and tenants' market would shift to a new cycle back to the landlord's market, Raymundo advises companies to secure a minimum five-year lease to maximize incentives and concessions that companies will be enjoying at this time.

"Likewise, this should maintain low rents when the market heads for the upcycle," added Raymundo.

Analysis

Analyzing the Philippine property cycle based on John Hopkins University Berman Real Estate Institute's Dr. Glen Mueller's cycle phases, the office sector, surmised Raymundo, is at the tail end of the cycle and is expected to reach trough by the second quarter of 2001. The high-end residential sector is also at the tail end of the recession phase and is already nearing its trough. Meantime, he sees the industrial sector already reaching its trough levels.

Also cited are the tail end cycle of the office sector. The Makati CBD's JG Summit Center is the last office development and is forecast to be completed on the third quarter of 2001. CJ puts the weighted average CBD rent to settle to P345 per sq. m. per month, describing it as "a peak-to-trough correction of nearly 50 percent."

Raymundo added that with the imminence of a supply vacuum in 2002 to 2004, enough time for the market to absorb the oversupply phenomenon is already given. Vacant space of 390,000 square meters at the end of 2001 is forecast.

CJ Research placed prime three-bedroom rents to have fallen 32 percent from its peak. The group added that it foresees another five-percent downside placed at P350 per sq. m. per month. Capital values for this sector, added CJ, are 27 percent from its peak and prices are expected to fall five percent further in the next four months.

Homebuyers warned vs fake realty brokers

THE NATIONAL Home Mortgage Finance Corp. said it has lifted the accreditation of realty brokers or persons even as it warned buyers of mortgage rights on residential properties earlier financed by the agency's housing loan against transacting with any parties misrepresenting themselves as NHMFC- accredited agents.

In a press statement, lawyer Angelico T. Salud, NHMFC president, explained that under the previous administration, the NHMFC authorized realty brokers and their agents, including non-government organizations (NGOs), to sell the mortgage rights on defaulted housing loans including the sale of foreclosed properties.

The accreditation of realty brokers and NGOs was revoked when the NHMFC's Sale of Mortgage Rights (Samoa) program was suspended in August last year, he said.

Effective said date, Salud warned that any transactions, such as but not limited to payment of cash deposits, reservations with a fee, issuance of authority to occupy housing units and such other forms of negotiations entered into by any private brokers and/or their agents using the name of the NHMFC are not valid and will not be honored by the NHMFC.

Instead, interested buyers should transact directly with the NHMFC's Special Account Unit (Tel. 893-1501, local 280 or 339).

Salud added that the public should report any person engaged in such unauthorized transactions to the Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, or directly to the NHMFC for filing of appropriate criminal or civil charges.

Triple 'A' contractor cashes in on innovation

E. GANZON Inc., Triple "A" contractor accredited by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board as a general building and general engineering firm, recently announced a new technological innovation in construction methodology.

The innovation is proven and tested in three recent projects it undertook for three different owners in Metro Manila, Cavite and Oriental Mindoro with outstanding success. In all those building projects, the owners and their technical consultants were very impressed with the speed with which the construction works have proceeded the quality of work and order with which site administration can be conducted with ease and the resulting savings in time, cost and absence of reworks or superfluous, extra finishing touches.

While currently the invention is pending patent, already the comments of observers and technical experts leave no doubt that E. Ganzon Inc. has again contributed to the science of building construction, a feat it has done on a number of occasions in the past.

Among the patented innovations created by the firm and currently in use, particularly in the construction of condominium buildings are Engineered Toilet and Bath System, EGI Drum Trap, EGI Septic Tank, EGI Water Line Sight Glass and Concrete Wall System.

The Current standard (EGI's innovation) surpasses the traditional building system by its innovative truss and concrete on-site assembly that puts stability, strength and efficiency in the walls and slabs, eliminating columns and thus, enabling the structure to give the owners with more usable space.

"Innovation," engineer Eulalio Ganzon, creator of this new system, used to say, "will distinguish in the long run, the technically strong construction companies from the "also runs." Indeed, because modern management recognizes that in a world of constantly changing technologies, those who innovate will always come ahead of the pack, E. Ganzon Inc. is only in the right direction. In fact, reaping already a rich harvest as a Triple "A" contractor with methodologies needed by construction companies to stay globally competitive.

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LIFESTYLE

Fitness

CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor

Use the power of the pen to lose weight and get fit

Monitoring your behavior with a journal can help you break a bad habit or make a good one

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Aboitiz Juan

Tuesday
Wednesday
Apple
Soup
Pear
FO
JOU

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

A RELATIVE told me that she has gotten tighter and leaner in the last two months. She attributed her success to her commitment to doing weights, Pilates, yoga, various kinds of aerobics and keeping a food journal. Since she started to write down everything she eats, she has become more aware of all the little "extras" she was nibbling on. Her food journal has made her fully conscious of what she is putting into her mouth. This has helped her make better nutritional choices like having a fruit instead of a few cookies.

She also encouraged another relative to keep a food journal and that person told me she just realized that whenever she brings a plate of crackers or cookies to her kids, one or two pieces "unknowingly" find their way into her mouth. I say "unknowingly" because when we make a mental tally of what we have eaten for the day, we don't usually count the small things that were not part of our main meals or snacks. However, those small things add up very fast.

This second relative told me she has a habit of taking bites of whatever her kids are eating. Since she has four kids and this happens several times a day, that is a lot of bites that can quickly accumulate into an extra 100 to 200 calories a day that is unaccounted for.

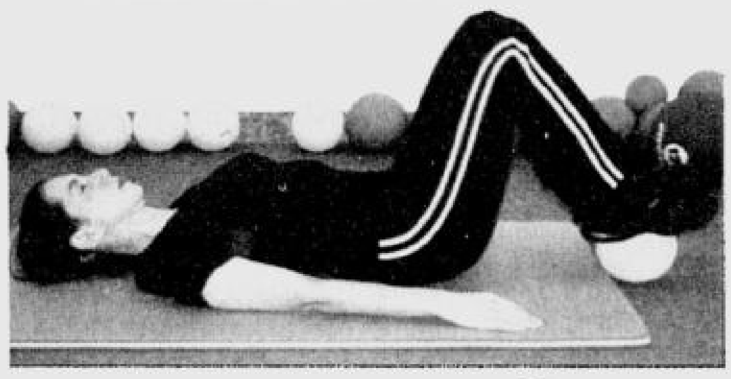
Food awareness

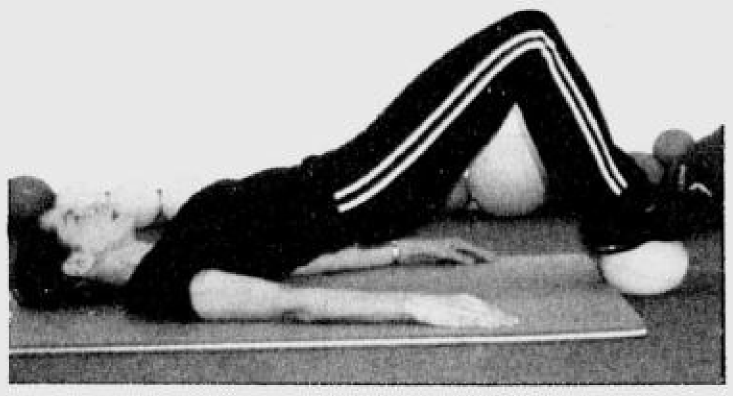
Writing down what you eat serves two purposes. One, it makes you aware of what you are eating. Studies have shown people will usually underestimate what they eat. Writing it down helps you to clean up your daily diet of all those extras you don't need. Two, it makes you aware of what you are not eating. For example, we are told by nutritionists that we need at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day although the ideal is nine to 10 servings. Many people don't even eat the minimum five servings. A journal is one way of making you realize this and hopefully prodding you to do something about it. It is vitally important that we drink at least eight glasses of water (more if you are physically active or are a tall person). How many of us actually do that? Keeping a record of how many glasses you have in a day goes a long way in accomplishing that goal.

If you are planning to consult a nutritionist, it would make things easier if you kept a food journal for at least two weeks. That way, the nutritionist will be able to do a re-

USE/ p.C3

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK





Hamstring bridge with ball

YOUR muscles have to work harder when you work with an unstable surface like a ball. This exercise really challenges the buttocks, hamstrings (back of the thighs) and the deep abdominal muscles.

Equipment:
Medicine ball or any other ball that can take your weight (examples: basketball, volleyball, soccer ball, etc).

Exercise technique:
1. Lie on your back with knees bent and medicine ball under your feet.
2. Place your arms on the floor at a diagonal angle between your shoulders and your hips.
3. Squeeze your buttocks and tighten your abs to lift your pelvis off the floor until your knees, hips and chest form a straight line.
4. Slowly lower your pelvis without letting your buttocks touch the floor and repeat.

Performance tips:
1. For more of a challenge, use the technique described above but with one foot on the ball and the other leg up (bent or straight). Same as above but with one foot on the ball and one leg up (straight or bent).
2. The hamstring muscle can be prone to cramping. Take care not to overdo this exercise if you are not used to it.

Repetitions:
Twelve to 15 repetitions. Rest. Do one more set if you want to.

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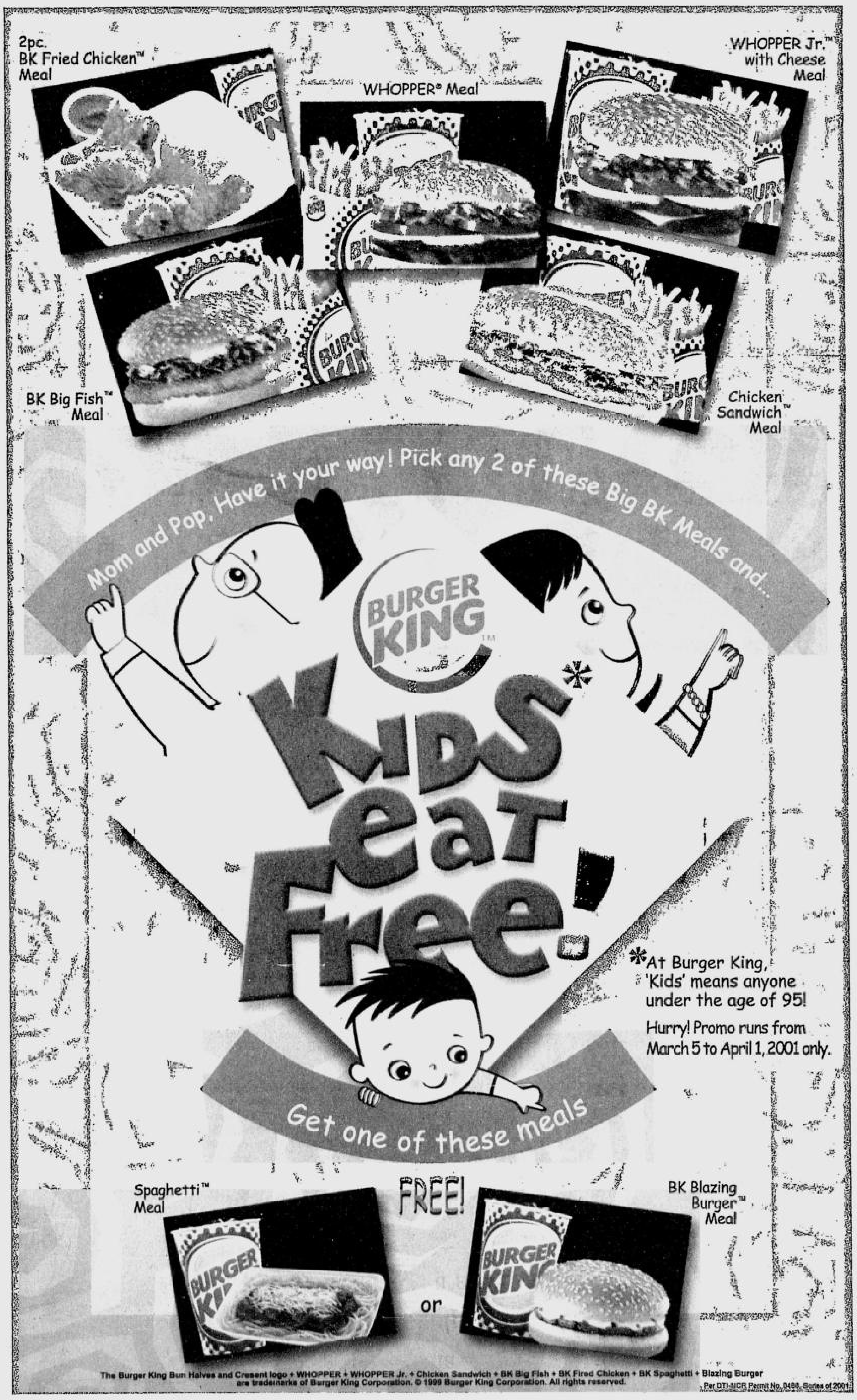
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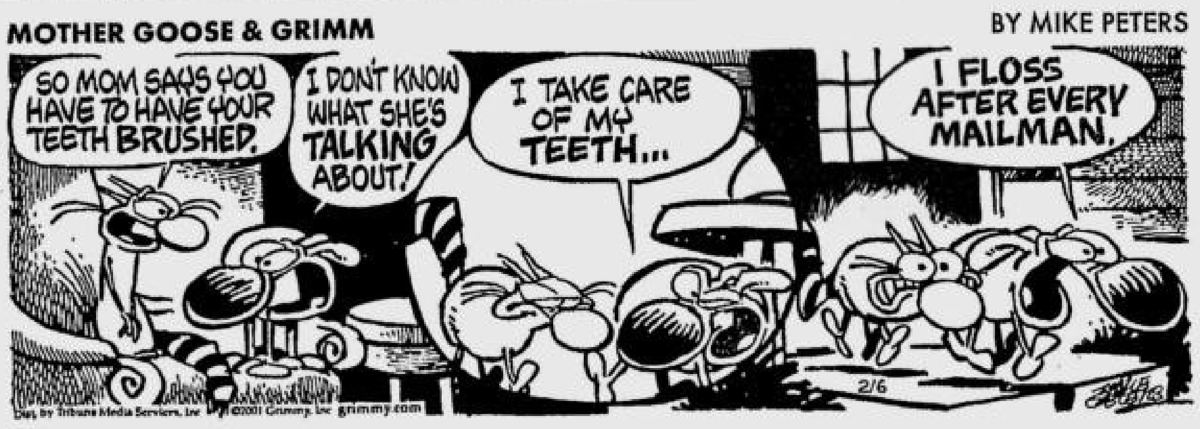
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


SO MOM SAYS YOU HAVE TO HAVE YOUR TEETH BRUSHED.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S TALKING ABOUT!
I TAKE CARE OF MY TEETH...
I FLOSS AFTER EVERY MAILMAN.
2/6
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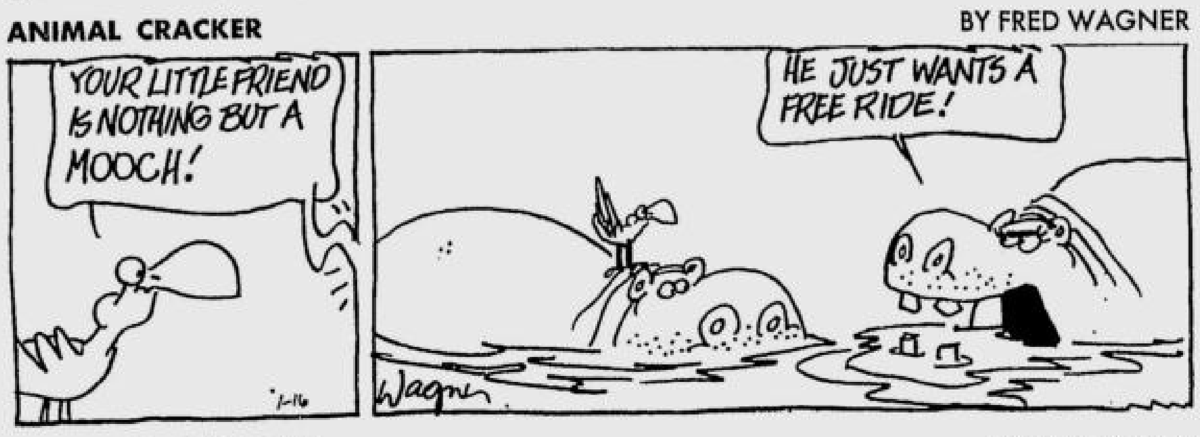
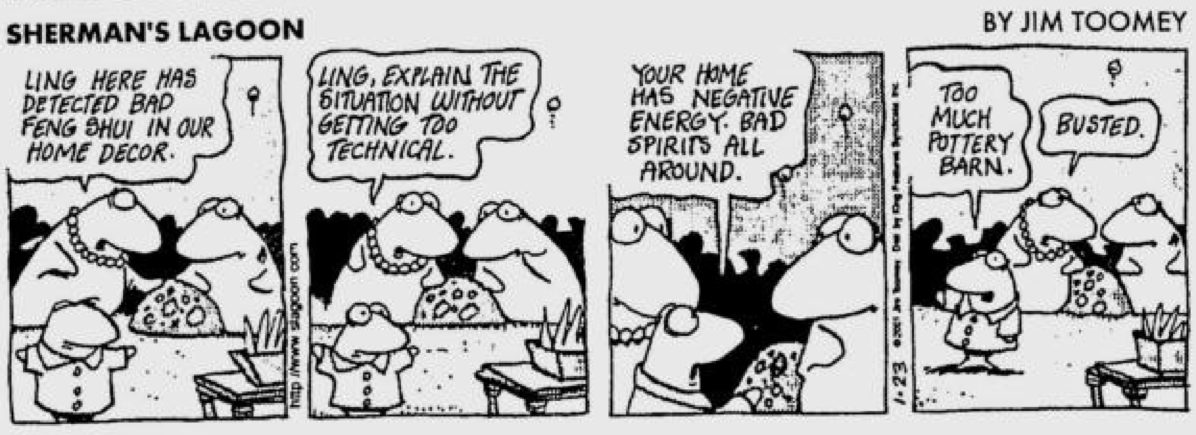
ANIMAL CRACKER BY FRED WAGNER


YOUR LITTLE FRIEND IS NOTHING BUT A MOOCH!
HE JUST WANTS A FREE RIDE!
1-16
Wagner

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY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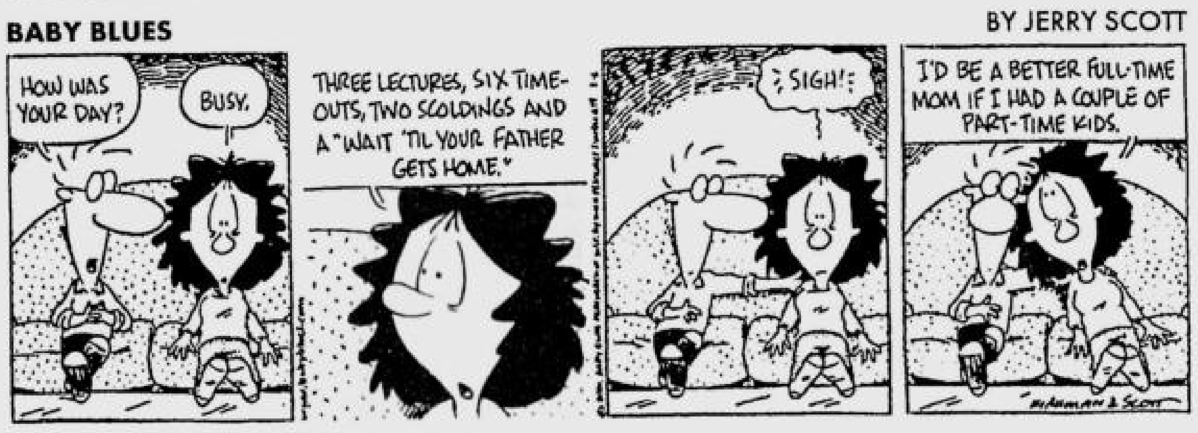
1-23

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


HOW WAS YOUR DAY?
BUSY.
THREE LECTURES, SIX TIME-OUTS, TWO SCOLDINGS AND A "WAIT 'TIL YOUR FATHER GETS HOME."
SIGH!
I'D BE A BETTER FULL-TIME MOM IF I HAD A COUPLE OF PART-TIME KIDS.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Shaquille O'Neal, Kiri Te Kanawa, Rob Reiner, Ed McMahon, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, D.L. Hughley, Kiki Dee

Happy Birthday: It's time to turn on the power and move full tilt, but watch out for obstacles along the way. You can get things done, but will pay a price. Be sure you know exactly what you want before you begin. You will not be able to stop midway and change your mind without losing ground. Precision, patience and practicality will be required this year. Your numbers: 18, 24, 31, 34, 38, 39

ARIES (March 21-April 19): If you've taken on too much as usual, you will find yourself in a tight spot. You had better sit down and decide what your priorities are before you disappoint someone you love.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Friends and relatives will be able to give you sound advice if you open up about your personal concerns. Travel will bring you in contact with interesting and intriguing new people.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Your energy is high and you're geared up to get ahead at work. Promote your ideas and don't be afraid to talk to your boss about your career direction.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't let your mood swings take over. Someone you care about may back off you if you can't control your emotions. Be prepared to make personal changes if it's required.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Dealing with government agencies or authority figures will prove to be frustrating. Try to concentrate on projects for your living quarters or on innovative financial investments.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You will enhance your reputation if you bend over backward to help someone in need. You are good at finding solutions to other people's problems. You will meet new friends if you go out.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't be drawn into a questionable plan at work. Gossip will only result in making you look bad. You must not take sides. Emotional upset will result in minor ailments.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Opportunities to meet new friends or lovers will unfold if you attend seminars, conventions or lectures. Your involvement in open discussions will bring you notoriety.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't be talked into spending too much on entertainment or dubious get-rich-quick schemes. It is better to give your time, not your cash when dealing with children or friends.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your lover will be uncertain about your relationship. Try to understand. You may want to give him or her more space until the uncertainty is resolved.

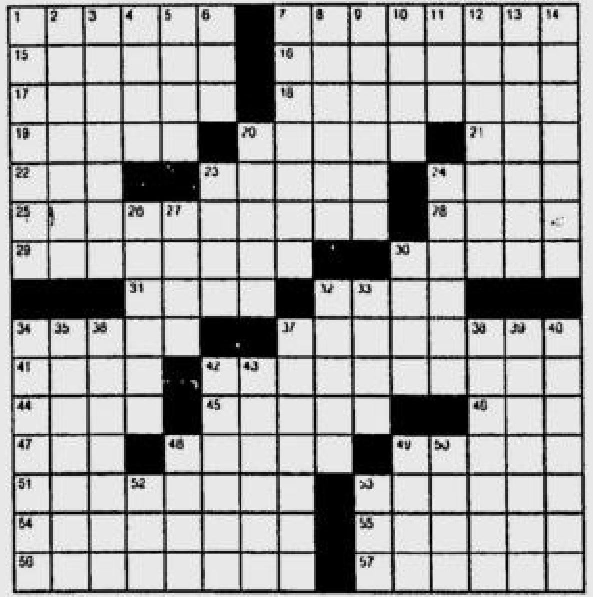
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Look into making those career changes you've been contemplating. You have some wonderful ideas. If you present them well, you may find yourself climbing the corporate ladder.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Your creative talent needs an outlet. Music, dancing or maybe even some writing would help satisfy your artistic desires. Don't hesitate to show your work. You will gain support and admiration.

Birthday Baby: Dashing, daring and dramatic are what you are all about. You have the charisma to melt hearts and will dazzle everyone with your astute and intellectual wit. You are always looking for something to do.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com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41 42 43
44 45 46
47 48 49 50
51 52 53
54 55
56 57

By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH
1/20/01

ACROSS
1 Corresponding friend
7 Plates, platters, saucers etc.
15 Son of Zeus
16 Rodent burrows
17 Row of suspects
18 Intensifies
19 Tea from India
20 Moisten with droplets
21 Lyric poem
22 E-mail address symbol
23 Republic on the Nile
24 Watery
25 Blindly adoring
28 Campus mil. grp.
29 Favoritism for family
30 Bogus
31 St. John's __
32 Highland group
34 Precipitous
37 Most select
41 Goes astray
42 Detestation
44 Fundamental part
45 Distress signal
46 Encountered
47 Five-and-a-half yards
48 Ancient Welsh priest
49 Bacterial infection, for short
51 Honey plants?
53 Virtuous
54 Flexible feeler
55 Ship's accounting officer
56 How to get a word in, at times
57 Playful mammals

DOWN
1 Heroic champion
2 One part of a series
3 Continuous
4 Entreaty
5 Grad
6 Droop
7 Liberty
8 Martin of "Mission: Impossible"
9 Pericles' purview
10 Melt
11 Came in first
12 Part of ATF
13 Makes additional revisions
14 Intrinsic nature
20 Fly apart
23 Get out of one's bed
24 Dazed condition
26 Bottommost
27 At the peak of
30 Impartial
32 Combination of musical tones
33 Traditional knowledge
34 Make an edge jagged
35 Marched
36 Wearing away
37 One-horse carriages
38 As a group
39 Symbol of sovereignty
40 Animal restraints
42 Second largest continent
43 In a dejected manner
48 Sketch
49 Close
50 Sharp-tasting
52 Dined
53 Naval noncom

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

T	R	A	W	L		D	A	W	N		A	V	E	R
A	E	R	I	E		O	L	I	O		B	E	L	T
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T	I	E	D		R	E	L	Y		T	E	N	S	E

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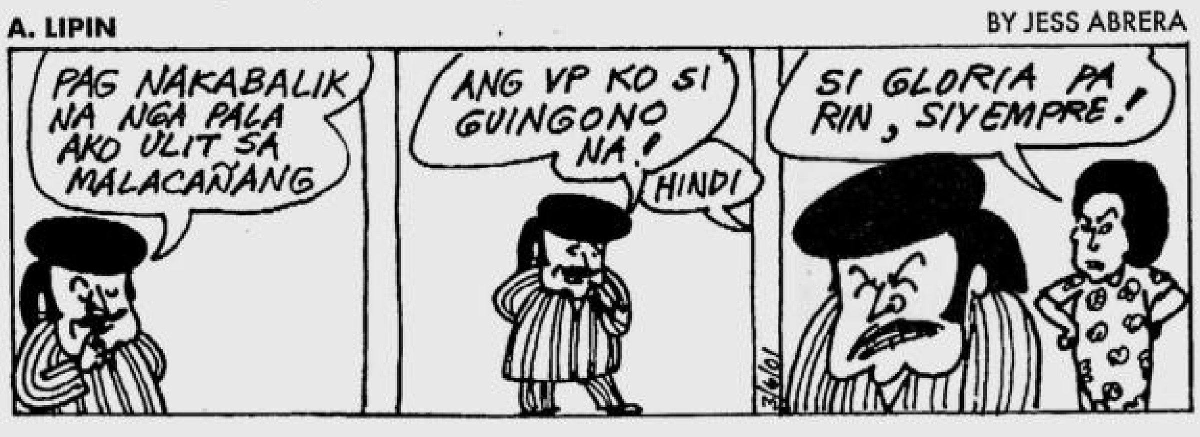
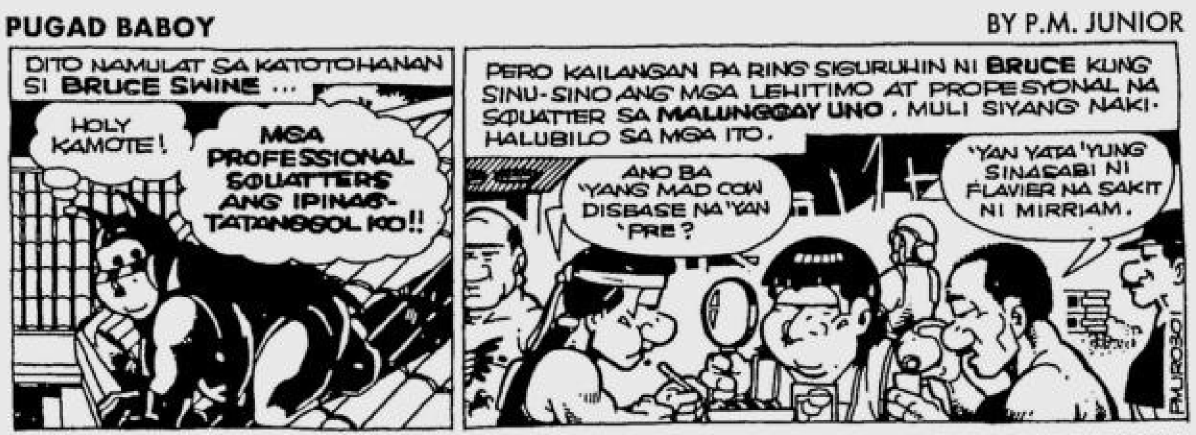
1/20/01

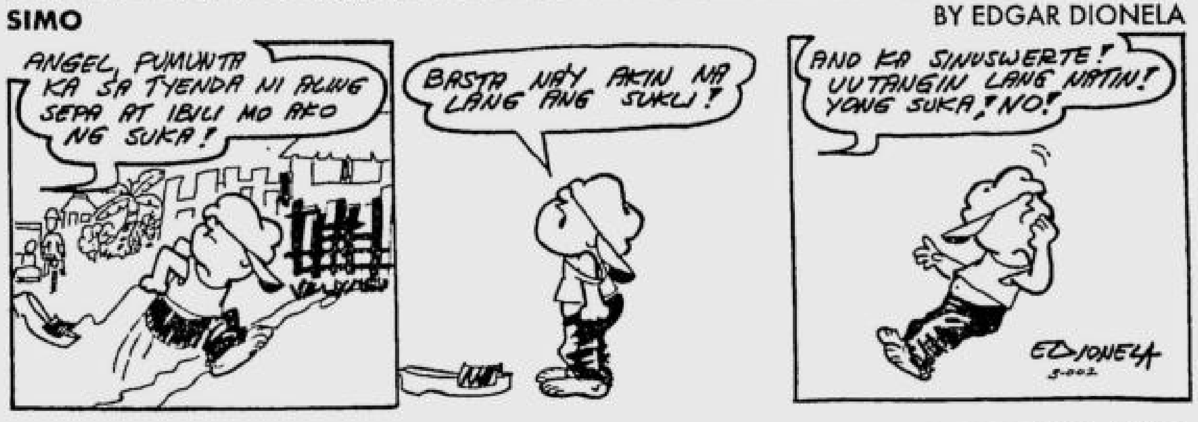
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


PAG NAKABALIK NA NGA PALA AKO ULIT SA MALACAÑANG
ANG VP KO SI GUINGONO NA!
HINDI
SI GLORIA PA RIN, SIYEMPRE!
3/6/01

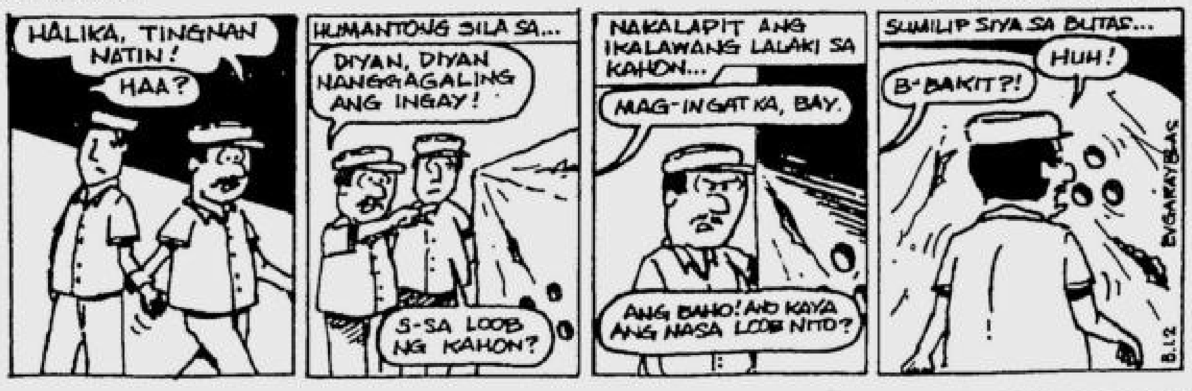
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


DITO NAMULAT SA KATOTOHANAN SI BRUCE SWINE ...
HOLY KAMOTE!
MGA PROFESSIONAL SQUATTERS ANG IPINAGTATANGGOL KO!!
PERO KAILANGAN PA RING SIGURUHIN NI BRUCE KUNG SINU-SINO ANG MGA LEHITIMO AT PROPESYONAL NA SQUATTER SA MALUNGGAY UNO. MULI SIYANG NAKIHALUBILO SA MGA ITO.
ANO BA 'YANG MAD COW DISEASE NA'YAN 'PRE?
'YAN YATA 'YUNG SINASABI NI FLAVIER NA SAKIT NI MIRRIAM.
PMJR0301

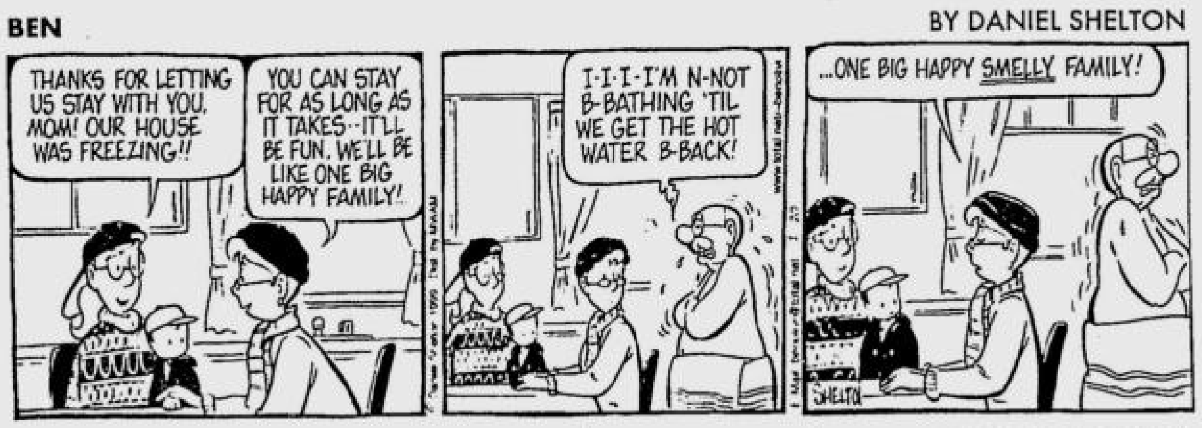
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


ANGEL, PUMUNTA KA SA TYENDA NI ALING SEPA AT IBILI MO AKO NG SUKA!
BASTA MAY AKIN NA LANG ANG SUKLI!
ANO KA SINUSWERTE! UUTANGIN LANG NATIN! YONG SUKA, NO!
EDIONELA
3-002

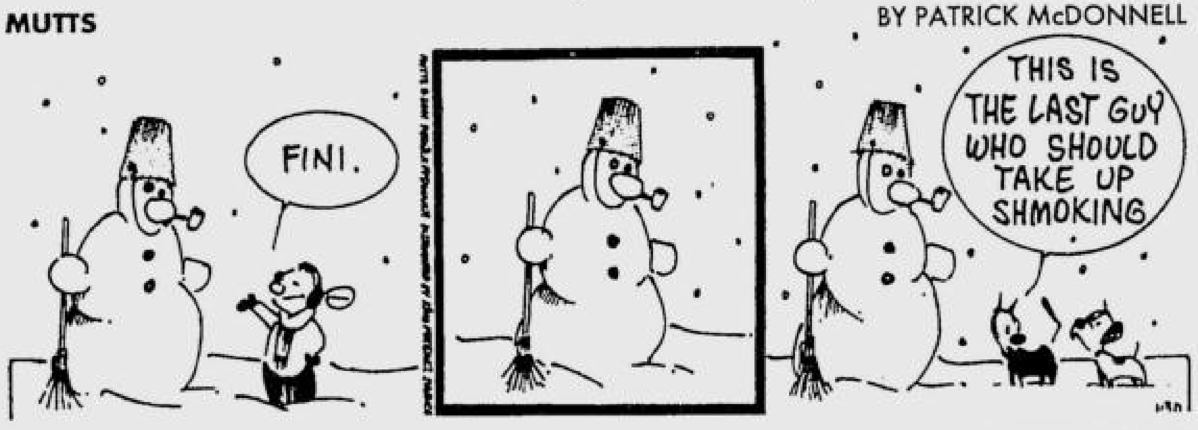
B1 GANG BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


HALIKA, TINGNAN NATIN!
HAA?
HUMANTONG SILA SA...
DIYAN, DIYAN NANGGAGALING ANG INGAY!
S-SA LOOB NG KAHON?
NAKALAPIT ANG IKALAWANG LALAKI SA KAHON...
MAG-INGAT KA, BAY.
ANG BAHO! ANO KAYA ANG NASA LOOB NITO?
SUMILIP SIYA SA BUTAS...
B-BAKIT?!
HUH!
8.12

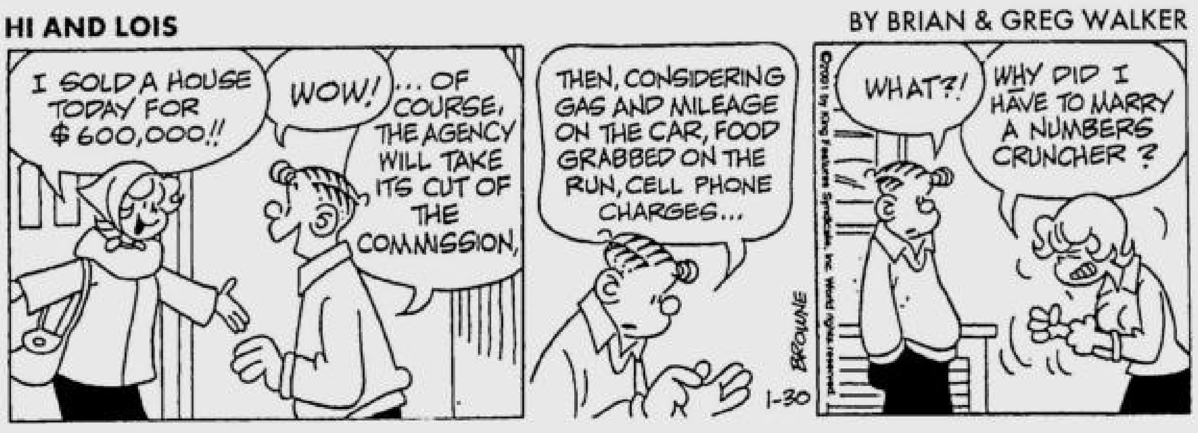
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


THANKS FOR LETTING US STAY WITH YOU, MOM! OUR HOUSE WAS FREEZING!!
YOU CAN STAY FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES--IT'LL BE FUN. WE'LL BE LIKE ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY!
I-I-I-I'M N-NOT B-BATHING 'TIL WE GET THE HOT WATER B-BACK!
...ONE BIG HAPPY SMELLY FAMILY!
SHELTON

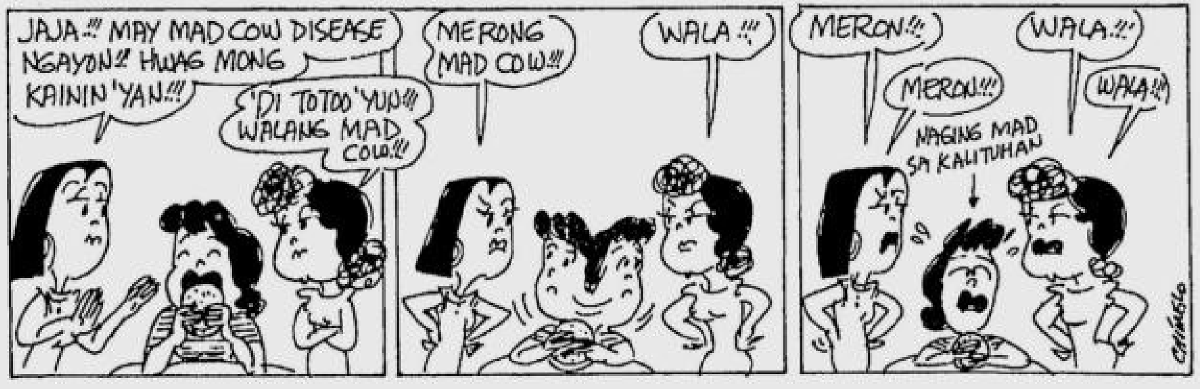
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


FINI.
THIS IS THE LAST GUY WHO SHOULD TAKE UP SHMOKING

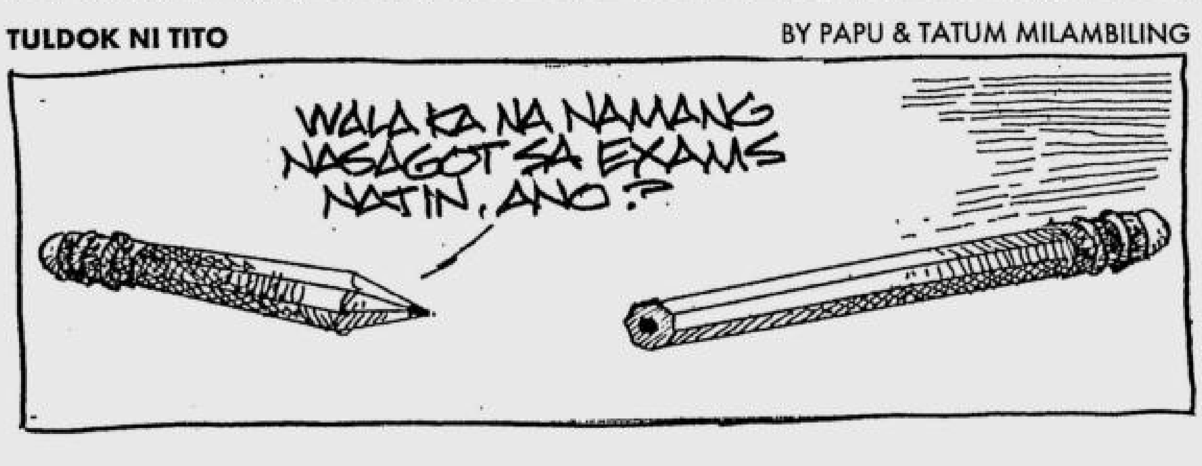
HI AND LOIS BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


I SOLD A HOUSE TODAY FOR $600,000!!
WOW!
... OF COURSE, THE AGENCY WILL TAKE ITS CUT OF THE COMMISSION,
THEN, CONSIDERING GAS AND MILEAGE ON THE CAR, FOOD GRABBED ON THE RUN, CELL PHONE CHARGES...
WHAT?!
WHY DID I HAVE TO MARRY A NUMBERS CRUNCHER?
BROWNE
1-30

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA!!! MAY MAD COW DISEASE NGAYON!! HWAG MONG KAININ 'YAN!!!
'DI TOTOO 'YUN!!! WALANG MAD COW!!!
MERONG MAD COW!!!
WALA!!!
MERON!!!
WALA!!!
MERON!!!
WALA!!!
NAGING MAD SA KALITUHAN
CHIONGLO

TULDOK NI TITO BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


WALA KA NA NAMANG NASAGOT SA EXAMS NATIN, ANO?

Why do thoughts and dreams come true?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

A READER from Cebu named Pauline wrote a long letter enumerating her extraordinary psychic experiences she could not understand. At first she was fascinated by all the things she could see and do with her mind, but lately she's beginning to be scared and wants to stop the things she sees from happening.

In her letter, Pauline asked some important and fundamental questions regarding the nature of psychic powers, dreams and their relationship to physical reality. I believe these questions are worth discussing in depth.

Why do dreams come true? What makes me dream these dreams? Can I stop my dreams from coming true? Do I have any reason to be scared? Is this the work of the devil or of God?

First, let us understand the nature of dreams. It has been said that "dreams are the language of the subconscious mind." There are many reasons we dream and there are many types of dreams. I think your main concern is about psychic dreams, also known technically as "precognitive dreams." This term refers to dreams that come true.

Dreams are products of our subconscious mind. The subconscious mind is not subject to physical time. One can see the past, present and the future, as if they are happening in the present.

On the mental and spiritual planes, there is no past, present or future. There is only the eternal now. Since higher reality is really one, the past or the future can be seen simultaneously with the present.

Future events are not the future as far as the subconscious mind is concerned. The future is even now happening on another plane of existence, which becomes physical reality at some future time.

You see, before anything manifest in physical reality, before it exist on the physical plane, it must first exist on the mental and spiritual planes.

You dream of future events because they are only the standpoint of the physical universe. In point of fact, they already are. That's the reason seers and real fortune-tellers or prophets can "see" the future.

Can you prevent a psychic dream from becoming a reality? Sometimes yes, at other times, no. It depends at what level it takes place in the other dimension. If the future is still subject to the will of man, then it can be changed; but if beyond that, if it has already passed that stage, there's nothing anyone can do about it, except God.

Foreseen events, no matter how bad they may seem from our point of view, are not necessarily the work of the devil. In fact, we ourselves may even be the cause of them.

God has given us free will to do whatever we want to, yes, even evil things. But then if we do, we suffer the consequences.

How is it possible for our thoughts to become physical reality? Why do some thoughts come true but others don't?

Pauline gives a few interesting examples why she asked the question.

"I reprimanded my overweight brother for wanting to eat meat at dinner time," she recalls, "I told him to eat fruits like banana, but he complained there was none. After an hour or two, the doorbell rang and a sack full of bananas arrived."

On another occasion, she was coming home and on the plane she remembered her brother was asking for playing cards. "I felt bad because I forgot about it. I was really surprised when the airline giveaways were playing cards."

She also told of a letter she wrote to her ex-boyfriend where she said to him their relationship would last for only five years, and that's what happened.

The reason this happens is because the physical is the last to manifest in the order of creation or manifestation. Before anything becomes a physical reality, it must first exist as a thought. Before a chair becomes one, it must first exist in the mind of the carpenter. Before a sculpture becomes a reality, it must first exist in the mind of the sculptor. Before the birds, the moon and the tree become a reality, they must first exist the mind of God.

Actually, what Pauline is doing is materializing her thoughts or desire without her realizing she's doing this.

Why do some thoughts or ideas become a reality and others don't? This depends on the strength of one's desire and the vividness or strength of one's visualization or mental picture of the thing desired.

The great American psychic and prophet named Edgar Cayce used to say that "mind is the builder, the physical is the result."

We must therefore be careful to keep our thoughts positive and loving so we produce only positive and loving things around us.

Do we then wonder why there are so much strife and problems in our country today? This is only a reflection of our collective thoughts as a people.

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@geocities.com. Visit www.angelfire.com/journal/licauco for more details. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

Use the power . . .

(From page C1)

alistic analysis of your diet. Otherwise, he or she will have to rely on your unreliable memory.

If you are a bodybuilder or involved in power or long distance endurance sports, you need extra protein. However, it is quite easy to overdo it without realizing it. Excess protein is tough on the kidneys and bones. It is highly recommended that you write down all your protein sources and protein supplements (if you are taking any) to keep track of how many protein grams you are actually consuming.

Keeping track of food and moods

One reason people gain weight is they eat when they are sad, mad, glad or scared. Boredom, stress and pressure at work or school are other reasons. If you want to find out if you are using food as an emotional crutch, write down what you are feeling when you eat. Also write down whether you are physically hungry. Keeping track of your moods and your actual hunger level gives you a clue to whether you are eating for physical or emotional reasons.

Keeping fit by writing it down

I haven't kept a food journal for a while since I learned to take control of my "extras" but I am now motivated to keep one again just to keep track of my fruit, vegetable and water consumption. What I have kept up all this years is an exercise journal. This has been an invaluable help in motivating me to stick to my exercise program. It's easy for me to do the aerobics part of my program because I teach a class five times a week. What is not so easy to stick to are the weights and Pilates parts of my program. This is because I travel a lot to train instructors and I rationalize that because my work is so physical, I don't need to do my weights or Pilates exercises for that week. However, training gym or aerobics instructors, even though I do have to demonstrate the exercises, is not the same as pumping iron and getting the lengthening and tightening effect of Pilates. When I reviewed my 1999 journal, I was right on the dot with the weights but lacking in Pilates. So I resolved to be more consistent with my Pilates. This year, when I looked over my 2000 journal, I was horrified to discover that I had only done 52 sessions of weights. It was as if I had only done one gym session a week all year. So my resolution for 2001 is to do my weights three times a week no matter what I am doing or where I am. I would never have realized how few gym sessions I did last year if I hadn't kept a record.

In the days when I was trying to build muscle and strength, I used to keep a detailed record of how much weight I was lifting. Now that I am in a maintenance phase, I only keep track of the type of exercises so I can revise my program every four to six weeks.

Keeping an exercise journal can be as simple as marking the days you exercise on a wall or desk calendar. Aside from people underestimating what they eat, studies indicate that people also overestimate how much they exercise. I have some clients who complain they are not seeing results as fast as they would like in spite of exercising "all the time." If they have really been working out religiously, I look for other factors like quality of exercise, diet, etc. But many times, when we pull out their actual attendance from the computer, it shows a pattern of inconsistency.

Pain journal

I hurt my left shoulder back in the '80s with wrong weight-lifting techniques. It doesn't give me any problems now as long as I am careful with my technique and I stay away from known "shoulder killer" exercises. However, because I experiment with all kinds of exercise programs, there are a few times it feels "funny." I keep a record of those times. I describe the sensation (dull ache, sharp pain, throbbing, etc) and what activities I was doing. I have discovered things like shaking my shoulders in Latin aerobics is not something my left shoulder likes. Also, I found out that when my bedroom is very cold, I tend to sleep all huddled up in one position (unfortunately on my left side) and my shoulder pays the price the next day. If I did not keep a "pain journal," I would have a hard time figuring out why my shoulder aches. You can do the same thing if you are prone to headaches or you have arthritis. If you have a bum knee, it will help your orthopedic doctor a lot if you write down what specific times of the day your knee hurts, what position you were in, did it hurt during or after exercise, etc.

Stop a bad habit; start a good habit

Habits are unconscious behavior patterns that have been ingrained into us by sheer repetition. That's why they are so hard to stop. Monitoring your behavior by keeping a journal is a proven way to help break a bad habit or start a good one, according to Robert Epstein, psychology professor and author of "Pure Fitness: Body Meets Mind." In fact, he says self-monitoring has been proven by four decades of psychology research to be highly effective.

For example, if you bite your nails, record exactly how many times a day you bite them. If you pull your hair, place the pulled hairs in an envelope and count them at the end of the day. Do the same with your cigarette butts if you are trying to stop smoking. If you say "you know" all the time, Epstein suggests counting how many times you say it by making a tear in a piece of paper in your pocket. He says monitoring your behavior will help you change your habit because it makes you realize what you are doing. You cannot change something that you are not even aware of doing in the first place.

The Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines will hold a basic instructor course at ProFit Center, Quezon City (every Saturday from March 3 to June 2) and in Baguio City on March 16 and 17. There will also be a Baguio fitness workshop that is open to the public on March 18. For Metro Manila, call Shirley Quejada at 426-5108. For Baguio, call Susan Sanidad at 074-4449798.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.com

KOLOURS
KOLOUR PREMIU
HA OLOURI RANGE

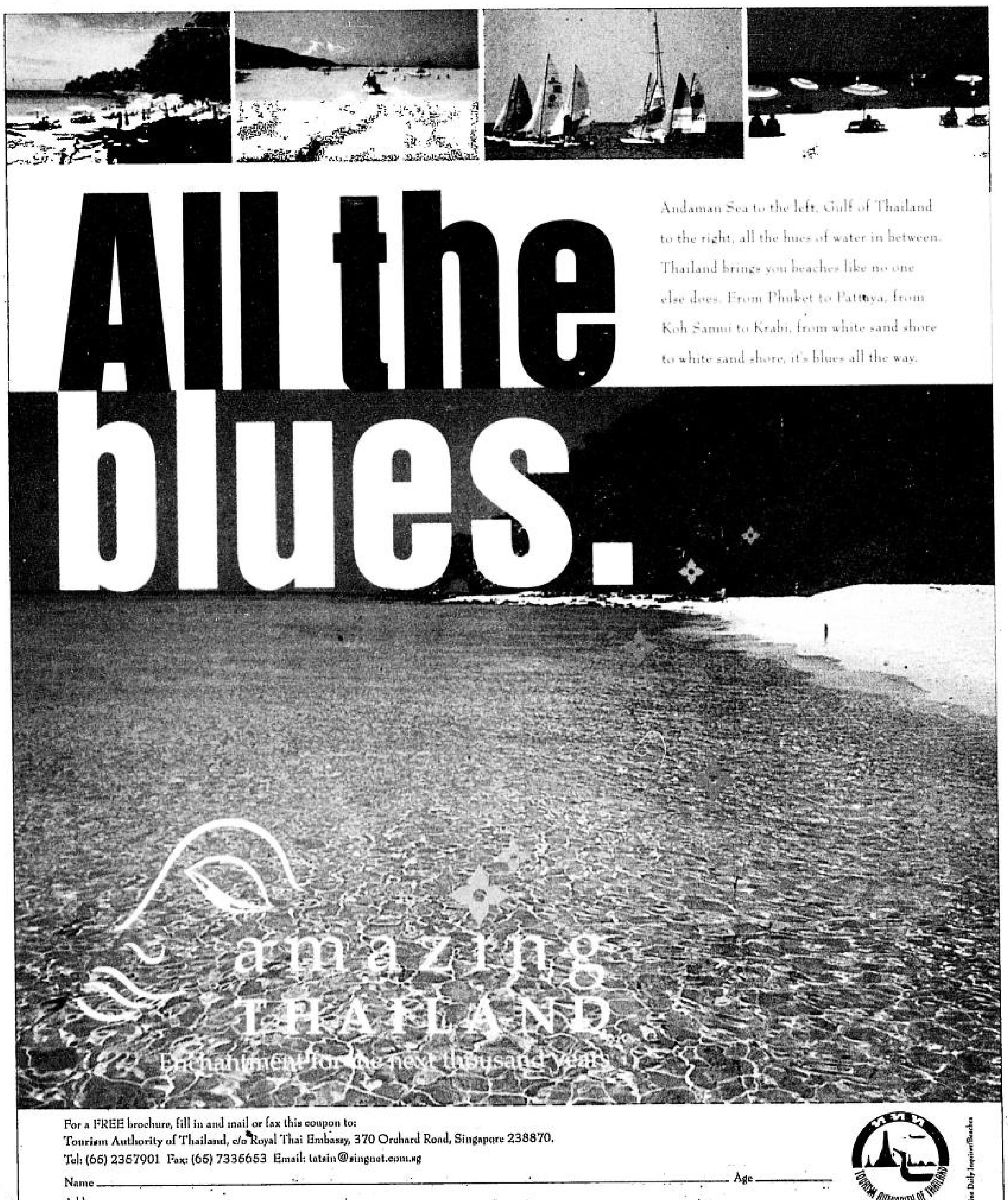
BEAUTY stylists, both the aspiring and professional, converge today at the World Trade Center to compete in the 10th Hair Asia's National Open Championship for Hairstyling and Makeup. Hair Asia's event organizer Evelyn Alvaran-Cruz (seated, center) is shown signing an agreement with major sponsor Kolours Premium Colouring Creme. Present on behalf of Splash Manufacturing Corporation, which produces Kolours, are Vicky Ofalsa (left), Byron Ceralde (right) and (standing, L-R), Elaine Romero, Leah Beltran and Alen Alban.

Postgrad course on biomechanics

ST. Luke's Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation holds its third postgraduate course for physical therapists titled "The Throwing Shoulder: Biomechanics, Related-Injuries and Treatment" on March 10, 7 a.m.-12 nn, at 14/F Auditorium, St. Luke's Cathedral Heights Building Complex, QC.

The panel of speakers includes Dr. Consuelo G. Suarez, dean of the College of Physical Therapy, University of Sto. Tomas, who will discuss "Biomechanics of the Throwing Shoulder"; Dr. Benedict Francis D. Valdecañas, St. Luke's orthopedic surgeon, who will talk about shoulder impingement and instability; and Dr. Michael N. Peralta, instructor at the College of Physical Therapy, University of Sto. Tomas, who will lecture about shoulder stabilization exercises.

Call 727-5415/725-6735.



Andaman Sea to the left, Gulf of Thailand to the right, all the hues of water in between. Thailand brings you beaches like no one else does. From Phuket to Pattaya, from Koh Samui to Krabi, from white sand shore to white sand shore, it's blues all the way.

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Address ____
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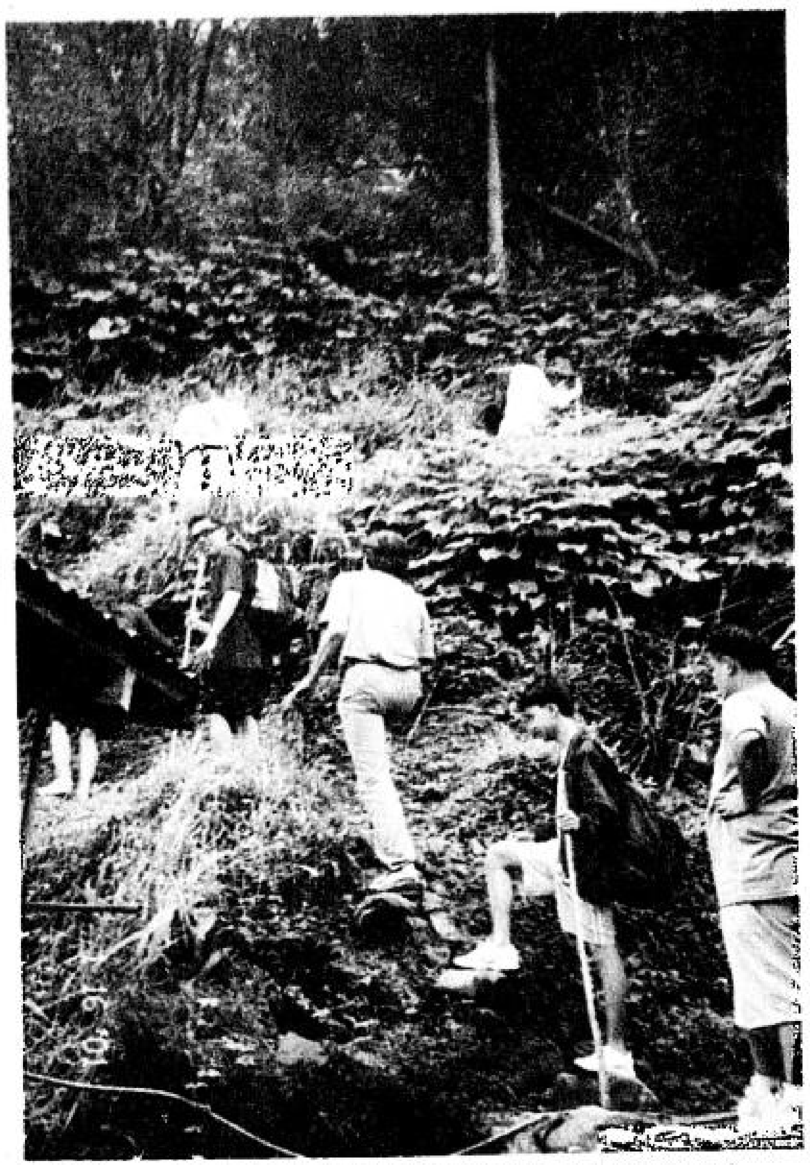


A HIKE up a ridge is a few days' worth of jogging on the boulevard.

PHOTO CREDITS: DINO DE LEON

STEP by dangerous step on a *pilapil* of the rice terraces

Getting a kick out of nature

BY CONSTANTINO C. TEJERO

THE KICKERS Weekend Adventure has been billed as a fun promotion of the natural beauty of the country and in part to "create an awareness of the existence of such exotic and majestic places." But what it truly is, is a marathon fitness program.

Consider: The group's first outing late last year was spent in five days of kayaking in Coron, Palawan. The second, also late last year, was four days of whitewater rafting in Infanta, Quezon. Early this year, the group went on mountain trekking and cave exploration in the Cordillera.

This is the major prize in a raffle promo wherein the shopper gets a coupon for every P500 purchase of any Kickers product. Minor prizes are Jansport backpacks and mobile phones from Smart.

The three major winners who go on the weekend adventure may bring along one companion each. Obviously, for minors, organizers have to secure waivers from parents.

> They said the Kickers Weekend Adventure to some exotic and majestic place was all for fun, but it truly was a marathon fitness program

On Jan. 18-21, we joined "Cordillera Discovery" with these adventurous souls: Kickers marketing assistant Dino de Leon, Euro RSCG account manager Kelly Austria, Tribal Adventure Tours guide Andrew Chinalpan Jr. and winners Jong Reyes and wife Charryl, Helen Valmadrid and bosom friend Sexy Mau Valiente, Mike Semala and kid brother Lucky. Ramon from Interisland Tours transported us on an MB1000 van.

Maybe the youngsters thought they'd just trip on the light fantastic on top of the rice terraces?

The first foreboding came when all cell phones lost contact the moment the van crossed the boundary beyond Nueva Vizcaya. Which meant, from hereon, there would be no communication with the outside world, no more *chismis*, giggles and endearments over the phone, as there were no cell sites in those godforsaken places.

Tricky way

After leaving their packs at the Native Village Inn on a mountaintop of Uhaj town in Ifugao, the group set out to find the hot spring Andrew said was located somewhere beyond the Hapao rice terraces.

It was midmorning, the sunlight was terribly bright on the cloudless mountaintop, the mind was afloat and the vision whirling from sleeplessness after some 11 hours of road travel. (Reminder: Get enough sleep and don't drink alcohol the night before going on such trek.)

In postcards, the rice terraces look like one beauty spot that can be as effortlessly scaled as a stroll in the park. Most of these photos are aerial or top views of those terraces, so people are mostly in the dark as to their height.

The fact is, in some areas, one terrace can get as high as the Great Wall of China. It isn't exactly scaling Mt. Apo, but the way can be as tricky. Remember that you are dealing with slippery matter here.

Kelly, at the head of one file, cast a sweeping glance at the panorama before her, vigorously shook her fists in the air, and declared, "I am the king of the world!" She made a few tentative steps on a *pilapil* (the bank of a rice paddy), then stopped short on her track.

The ever-narrowing *pilapil* and the muddy water below gave her vertigo, and now she was paralyzed with fear. It was a one-way footpath, so everyone behind her also had to stop and wait until she could muster the courage to proceed. From then on, she kept at the end of the line (and thus ended her short reign).

Dangerous steps

Carrying walking sticks and staffs for support and balance while negotiating their way across the rice paddies, the group tried to avoid looking at the water below as the pattern of the rows of rice plants, their reflection, the blinding light and the wind's ruffling of the water made them dizzy. One misstep and you'd fall 20-30 ft below on the mud. You wouldn't die, of course, but a fracture is still painful.

At some points, the group had to crawl up the sides of the terraces, grasping at weeds and grappling with whatever vines and roots of bushes there were. Forget civilization—here, you just have to behave like worms to survive. One misstep and...

About two hours later, after a few pratfalls on the mud and several scratches and bruises from all that hiking up ridges and trekking around the terraces, some from the group realized they should have refrained from smoking and taken jogging for a month before going on this trip. *(Akala n'yo magpu-*pose *lang at magkokodakan sa* Ifugao rice terraces, *'no?)*

. What they found in the wilderness was a creek, the burbling spot where frigid water from the mountains and hot water from the earth converged. The reward for all those troubles was a warm soak in Jacuzzi-type water and a relaxing stretch on top of monolithic rocks (some as big as houses) while staring at the sky and the treetops above.

Risky undertaking

The wildest journey taken by the group was the exploration of Sumaging Cave, the biggest of those famous limestone caves of Sagada in Mountain Province. This one has a tunnel system that connects to several smaller caves a few kilometers away, most of them still unexplored.

On the onset, we asked the group if they carried their IDs with them. They turned up querulous faces, and we explained how dangerous, how risky was the undertaking they were about to do. *Buti kung* fracture *lang*—how about if the whole foundation would collapse, and there'd be a cave-in, who would identify their... *huwag naman sana!*

Okay, okay, it was gallows humor played upon kids, but what we were saying was, always be prepared when you go on such an adventure. It's not as if you were negotiating through traffic in Manila.

With two Petromax lamps and a local guide authorized by the *municipio*, the group descended hundreds of natural stone steps into the cave. There were guffaws around as the group teasingly paired the pubescent guide with Sexy Mau, until the previously dusty steps became more and more slippery.

Tortuous path

At the mouth of the cave, Cha-cha revealed she was two weeks pregnant and she might not be able to take the physical stress, so she couldn't proceed.

Halfway into the cave, Kelly, the erstwhile king of the world, stopped and rested on a stone by a shoal, and made some excuses.

Of the four girls, only Sexy Mau gathered the courage to go with the boys. And she was the slimmest, too, so that negotiating through holes and crevices in the rocks wouldn't be a problem.

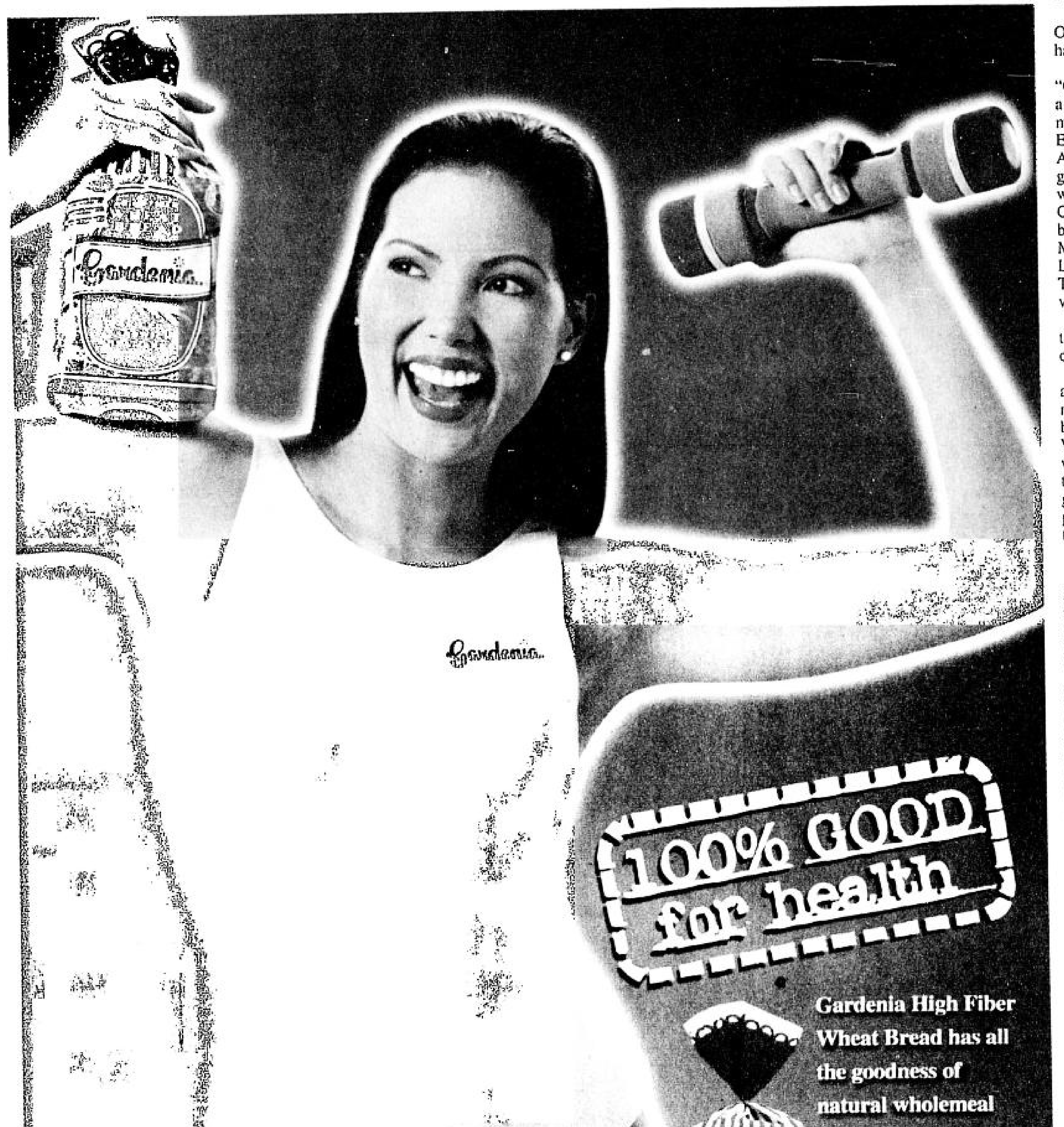
The path into the bowels of the earth was tortuous, involving wading waist-deep (chest-deep to Sexy Mau) in the freezing water of an underground stream, worming through a fissure in the cave flooring (the trick is to haul your body into the hole facing backward), and hanging on to a rope on the cave wall above a rocky shoal.

The reward was a quick dip in the frigid water of a lagoon (8 ft at the deepest) and the hard massage of a low slender waterfall. That quickens the blood, and you emerge as a new person when you return from the underground.

Four days of such physical exertion, specifically weight-bearing activities, will not only harden the muscles and preserve bone density, but it can also increase agility, enhance the sense of balance, sharpen the wit and fortify the soul.

And, yes, really, after surviving the Kickers Weekend Adventure, you, too, would feel like the king of the world.

CREATURES OF THE DARK LAGOON. The frigid subterranean water quickens the blood.



Gardenia High Fiber Wheat Bread has all the goodness of natural wholemeal wheat flour and natural honey. It's fortified with vitamins to meet the demands of your active lifestyle.

AVAILABLE AT Supermarkets: SM Shoemart, Landmark, Robinson's, South, Glorimart, Ever, Waltermart, Cherry Foodarama, Shopwise, Eunilane, Sta. Lucia, Shoppersville, CVC, Puregold, Save More, Makro, Big R, Hi-Top, Isetann, Masagana, Parco, Better Living, Rempson, Fernando's, Purity, Bacani, Konika, Jomafer, Popong, Marimart, P&C, Super Nova, P&T, Baytree, Alfie's, Cesar's, Alexander, Anson's, Novadeci, Citimart, Southern Twins, Exceltom, Casa Hacienda, Sumile, Pacita, Market Basket, Value Point, Top Choice, Olivarez, Vela Mart, Ilano, Abad, Emiluz, Rey-sal, Cabuyao, Morales, SC, Good Will, and Buan.

Convenience Stores: 7-Eleven, Binggol, Caltex Starmart, Shell Select, Petron Treats, Total La Boutique, New Ever Foodmart, Mightee Mart, South Market Place and Easy Mart.